TWO

TREATISES.

THE FIRST, THE YOUNG MANS MEMENTO.

Shewing { How / Why / When } We should remember GOD.

OR

The seasonableness and suitableness of this work to *YOUTH.*

THE SECOND, NOW if EVER.

PROVING

1 That God gives Man a Day.
2 That this Day often ends while the means of Grace continues.
3 That when this Day is ended, peace is hid from the Soul.

Being an *Appendix* to the former Treatise.

Both by *John Chishull*, Minister of the Gospel

London, Printed by *W. B.* and are to be sold by *F. Eglesfield*, at the Marygold in St. *Pauls* Church-yard. 1658.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

Right Honourable

The Lady

JANE DISBROW.

MADAM,

THE constant experience of your readiness to accept of my poor labours hath given me good assurance, that you will at least pardon me for presenting these few Sermons to publick view under your name; especially when your Ladiship shall understand the Reasons which have swayed me in this thing.

First, I know not otherwise how to express my desire to serve you, nor to let the World know what impressions those many respects you have cast upon me have made upon my spirit. Let the Dedication of this small Treatise be so far significant as to assure your Honour that there is nothing mine which may be by way serviceable, but it is wholly yours.

Secondly, I could not in my thoughts fix upon any more fit to bear witness to the Truths herein presented to the World. The two great

things commended to the considerations of men in the following Discourse are these: the suitableness of Youth, and the unsuitableness of Old Age to the work of our souls, and especially to begin to mind these.

The first of these, through Mercy, you have experienced, having begun with God betimes, and laid up a stock of Grace and Experience, the comfort and rejoycing of your own Soul, and of all that know you intimately: so that you can set your Seal to this, That it is good to bear the yoke in youth.

As for the second, The Lord hath antedated your experience of this, having shewen you in Youth what Old Age is, and before those evil days come, he hath manifested to you how evil and unfit they are to begin to minde God. Have not the many sharp afflictions under which you have been exercised, turned the middle Age into Old? and can you not say, That when either Old Age, or Weakness (which is equivalent) come before Grace, they bring evil days with them? But it is of the Lords goodness that laid in something before hand to turn your evil days into good, and to make them days of Experience as well as of Patience.

Thirdly, I am confident your Ladiship will not forget to command your family and especially your children, concerning these things, that

that they, being strengthened by your Authority, and confirmed by your Experience, may be efficacious amongst them for good; so will the Lord bring upon you the blessings of his Covenant, as he did on faithful Abraham, Gen. 18, 19. *If the Lord shall turn this work to the good of your self, or any of yours, it will be the rejoycing of my heart.*

Now for the effecting of this, and that he would fill your latter days with the comforts wherewith he hath comforted you in former times, and make you as one of those plants in his house, (*mentioned* Psal. 92. 13.) *to flourish in old Age; That he would renew your strength, and continue you long in Zion, an Honour and Helper to his people, you shall not want the prayers of*

Your Honours most affectionate
Servant,

JO. CHISHULL.

Tiverton, *Aug.* 24.
1654.

To my dearly Beloved Friends, the Inhabitants of *Tiverton*, especially the Young men of that place.

DEarly beloved and much longed-for in the Lord, My hearts desire is that you may be saved; and although I have endeavoured the good of you all, yet I have carried you young ones in a singular manner upon my heart; and in my hopes for your sakes I can truly say, I have abode in this place unto this day, though it hath been a *Mesech* to me.

The Observation of others (that the Ministry hath its success amongst the young ones) and my own experience (having through mercy the seal of mine amongst the youth) did, and doth still set my thoughts at work for you day and night, if by any means I might be instrumental to your souls; and blessed be the Lord that my labour hath not been altogether in vain, in as much as some have acknowledged, that the first awaking word, which they received, was from this

this inſuing Diſcourſe; and many of you found it a word in ſeaſon, witneſs your importunities to make it publick, which was a thing altogether beyond my intention, when I ſet my thoughts upon this ſubject; but conſidering your continued deſires, and the pains which you took to convey it from hand to hand by writing, together with your care to get it tranſcribed for the Preſs, when I could attend neither to that nor to the peruſing of it (in regard whereof it is gone forth very rawly, and as it came from the Pulpit) I ſay conſidering your earneſt deſires expreſt in theſe and more particular, I no longer withſtand your motion, but have adventured to ſend it abroad, begging your prayers, that it may anſwer your ends and mine, and prove ſerviceable to you all, and to others abroad in the Nation, as it hath to ſome of you; but before you proceed further, take theſe few Intimations for Caution and Counſell with you.

1. Vain man is ready to complain that his life is ſhort, yet he ſeldom complains of that which principally makes it appear ſo. When do you hear him ſigh becauſe of the length of this work, or the difficulty of getting and ſecuring an intereſt in God and eternal life; when indeed this alone makes a mans life ſeem a ſhort thing? The life of

man

man ſeems not ſhort till it be compared with eternity; and conſidered as a time allotted to provide for that; if a man had no more to do than the moſt of men do minde, *viz.* to eat, drink, ſleep, and ſee the world and the faſhions of it; he hath no reaſon to complain that life is ſhort: for a little time will ſerve for theſe, and why ſhould a man deſire much time for recreation? The beaſts which live for theſe things as well as we, live not half ſo long, and if thou liveſt for nothing elſe, thou liveſt long enough, if but half the age of a Man, which is more than the age of a Beaſt. The life of a Beaſt is long enough for a Beaſtlike life.

2. Though they complain of life as being ſhort, yet they are prodigal of it as being long. Who would complain that he hath but a little, and yet out of that little would ſpare ſo much? That ſays he hath but a ſhort time to live, and yet will caſt away ſo large and conſiderable a part of that time, as Youth from the buſineſs of living?

3. When men do begin to think of living, they do but think of it: they ſpend that time in debating which ſhould be ſpent in reſigning: Delays do mix with their reſolutions, ſo that they are like thoſe fooliſh women always learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth; they are always

always doing of something, which they never do: their Resolutions hang betwixt their Convictions and their Temptations: some impressions they are upon their spirit, and they are almost perswaded to be Christians, but they cannot break thorow. There is nothing in Controversie but the time, whether *Now*, or to *Morrow*: thus it hath been with many for a long time; and who knows when this dispute will be ended? *Inter cætera mala hoc quidem habet stultitia, quod semper incipit vivere*: Folly is full of Delays, and these have undone more than Denials. Men say not to God depart from us, but come again to morrow; and this reiterated is equivalent to a final and positive denial.

4. When men see that something must be done for Heaven and Eternity, they do assign Old age for this work, which is neither certain or suitable: for whiles they resolve to begin to live when they must end, who knows not that they may (and often do) end before they begin? But if they do see that time is not fit for such a work? is it a time to get wisdom and understanding? Men do indeed speak honourably of old Age for wisdom and knowledge, but surely it is not for that which they get then, but for that which they treasure up in their youth:

Who knows not that Old Age is indocible, and that it fills the Soul with wrinkles as as well as the Body, does not the one grow old as well as the other, and both return to infancy again? To wax old (ſays one) is not to wax wiſe, nor to take away vices, but to change them worſe. And doth not the text here call it *an evil day?* and the evil of it appears in nothing ſo much as in this that is unfit for this great work unto which it is vainly appointed. Were not that Carrier a fool who begins to go a far and foul journey, and having choyce of ſtrong and luſty Horſes, would lay the greateſt and heavieſt load upon a poor, weak, ſickly, decrepit and lame Horſe, who is ſcarce able to bear himſelf, and let the other which are ſtrong and luſty go empty? What is he then who lays the weight of Repentance upon Old Age which can hardly bear its own infirmities, and lets his Youth, the ſtrong part of his life, go away without bearing any part of this yoak or burthen? I ſpeak not to reproach Old Age (for doubtleſs gray hairs with righteouſneſs are honourable) but to caution you that you may avoid thoſe rocks upon which men do ſo commonly ſplit themſelves, and to ſtir you up to take hold of the preſent time, becauſe now has the promiſe, and no part of thy life is comparable

to

thy Youth, for that hath not onely the advantage of ſeaſonableneſs; but it hath alſo the Promiſe with advantage. *Prov.* 8. 17. *They that ſeek me early ſhall finde me?* ſtrive? O ſtrive earneſtly therefore to redeem this part of your lives from vanity. Be not like the *Circuſſians*, a mongrel kinde of Chriſtians (as one calls them) who divide their lives betwixt Sin and Devotion, giving up their Youth to Luſt, and Old Age to Repentance, leaſt the Lord who abhors ſuch a diviſion, diſdain ſuch a repentance. Remember that the Lord hath choſen this part of your life, and encouraged it above all other; he loves not thoſe *Arbores Autumnales* which bud at the end of the year, and never come to maturity, but he choſe the Almond-tree *Numb.* 17.8. *Jer.* 1.11. becauſe that is the firſt of all Trees that bloſſoms, which, as *Pliny* reports bloſſoms in *January*, and his fruit is ripe in *March*. The Lord will reckon your lives according to your growth in grace, not according to the length of your days. Minde that notable oppoſition that is made betwixt the old Sinner and the young Saint. *Iſa* 65. 20. *The childe ſhall dye a hundred years old, as under the bleſſing of long life but the ſinner dying a hundred years old, ſhall dye as if he had been unſeaſonably cut off.* One ſhall be counted

ted old, becauſe bleſt, and the other young, becauſe accurſed. *Din fuit ſed non diu vixit*: Men ſhall have the honour of Age, not becauſe they have lived long, but well. He that hath lived to God in a little time hath lived longer than he that lived many years to himſelf and the world. The way to come to an Old Age, is to begin to be old whiles you are young. Do that in youth which others ſay they will do in old age: ſo ſhalt thou dye in a full age, whether it be in old age, or in youth. The way to attain truly honourable age, is to ſtudy that which will honour age, yea, which will make any age paſs for old. The gracious Young man is an old man betimes; it was this way that *David* got ſo much honour, ſo much wiſdom, that he was preferred before the antients, *Pſal.* 119. 98. 99, 100. ver. You have ſo many advantages in your hands now, and ſuch an eaſie way to happineſs, that an old experienced ſervant of Chriſt conſidering them, would often ſay, that if it were lawfull to envy any, he would envy thoſe who turned to God in their youth, whereby they eſcaped much ſin and ſorrow, and were like unto *Jacob*, who ſtole the bleſſing betime. By theſe things you may ſee that it is time for you all, Old and Young, to awake and ſeek the Lord while he may be found; if it be time

for

for the Young to begin, it is time that others had more than begun; *The night is coming when no man can work*, The Lord perswade your hearts, and teach you to get wisdom while you have the price in your hands; and if this be done seriously and seasonably, you will never repent it. For your furtherance in this, you have the prayers of him who is

Tiverton, *Aug.* 24. 1654.

Yours to serve you in the work of the Gospel,

JO. CHISHULL.

To

To the Reader.

HEre are two Treatiſes preſented unto thee; if thou art Young, here is a Memento *for thee; if Old, a* NOW IF EVER. *They need not the teſtimony of Men, they ſpeak ſufficiently for themſelves; but if there be any weight in my teſtimony to provoke Young or Old to peruſe them, this I have to ſay and ſignifie, that they are very worthy of publick view, and the peruſual of all ſorts; and that whoſoever ſhall ſeriouſly read them, will reap much benefit by them, finde much delight in them, and diſcern they proceed from a gracious and judicious Spirit. Their birth is very ſeaſonable; for never did Young or Old more forget God, neglect their Souls, and Eternal eſtates, than in theſe corrupted and corrupting times, than in theſe ſecure and back ſliding days. I do therefore commend theſe awakening Treatiſes to all, both Young and Old, intreating them to read, obſerve, and improve the precious Truths, and weighty Arguments therein brought to move them timely to remember God, and to provide for their everlaſting welfare, which is the great work all have to do in this World; and that it may be done, is the hearty deſire of*

WILLIAM GREENHIL.

THE Young mans *Memento*.

ECCLESIASTES 12. 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,

THe words I have read, are an exhortation ſeaſonable and ſuitable enough, in that they point particularly at ſome, but include and concern all; they are almoſt the laſt breath of the Preacher; and we know if a good Orator hath been pleading in a caſe of importance, he uſually draws up things of the greateſt weight in the concluſion, that if any particulars ſhould be loſt, yet the laſt words of the Sermon ſhould ſtick.

They are the main uſe of this Text which he had preached upon; which he propoſes, Chap. 1. 2. *Vanity of vanity, ſaith the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity*; & proves in the following Chapters by words of Wiſdom and Experience two weighty conſiderations to endear the doctrine to us. He

ſhuts

shuts up the roof, Chap. 11. verf. 8. *But if a man live many years and rejoyce in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkneſs, for they are many. All that cometh is vanity.* And the laſt argument which he uſeth, is from the ending and concluding of all theſe things; there is a certain night of evil and ſorrow which will follow the brighteſt day, which we do or can enjoy in the world; if no troubles come with it, yet there is enough comes after it to blaſt it in our thoughts. From hence he proceeds to Application, and it is to Young-men. Chap. 11. 9 *Rejoyce O young man in thy youth, and let thine heart chear thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes:* This is not a complying with, but a confuting of the vain fooliſh reſolutions of youth; by this he derides their thoughts, and withall gives them a preſervative or antidote againſt ſuch madneſs. *Know thou that for all theſe things God will bring thee to judgement.*

In my Text, we have,

1. The duty, in the whole words; In which, firſt, the Act, *Remember.* Secondly, the Object, *Creator.*

2. Here is the adjunct of Time. Firſt, more generally, *In the days of thy youth.* Secondly, more ſpecially, *now.*

Let

Let us weigh the words themſelves, *Remember*, if we take it in the ſenſe of the Philoſopher, for the exerciſe of the Memory, it then includes three things.

Firſt, an exerciſing of the intellectual faculty of the Soul, which is *Conſervativa ſpecierum*, whereby we do receive and keep the forms and impreſſions of things, and of Truths in our underſtandings, and ſo all thoſe manifeſtations of God which are made to the ſoul.

Secondly, an exerciſing of the Senſitive part of the Soul, in keeping things, and Actions, and Providences which are paſt, wherby we regiſter the things that God hath done, either for, or againſt us and others.

Thirdly, It contains that which they call *Reminiſcentiam*, which is an endeavouring to call to mind, or recover thoſe things which are fallen from the Memory, which are not razed out of the intellectual part of the ſoul, being there habitually, but from the ſenſitive part onely: for the preſent we do not remember them; but I ſhall ſhew you the uſe of this in the Scripture; there it is taken more largely.

1. It ſignifies ſometimes to muſe upon a thing, *Pſ.* 62. 6.

2. Sometimes to prize, or eſteem, or value a thing, *Eccleſ.* 9. 16.

3. Some-

3. Sometimes to truſt in a thing or perſon, *Pſal.* 20. 7.

4 Sometimes it includes all the ſervice of God, *Deut.* 8. 11, 12.

Indeed the ſignification of it is, or may be various, it may be uſed to expreſs any motion or affection which is uſually joyned to our knowledge, or the exerciſe of it. *Verba cognitionis non ſolam & nudam γνῶσιν ſed vivam & efficacem ſignificant.* A man may be ſaid truly to know no more than he knows with affection, and impreſſion: ſo remembring, which is nothing elſe properly but a ſetting this knowledge at work, and reviving of thoſe notions which we have of things, includes not onely the act of the Memory, but the Will: for this is uſually moved one way or other by every motion of the Underſtanding.

We finde very often the motions of the Will and Affections ſet forth by this word in the Text, *Heb.* 11. 15. Truly if they had been mindful of that Country from whence they came out, *i. e.* if they had deſired to return again, they might have had an opportunity.

Jon. 2. 7. *When my ſoul fainted in me, I remembred the Lord.* This is ſuch a remembring, ſays *Junius*, as doth not onely bring God to our thoughts, but carries the whole ſoul

ſoul with the greateſt intention to mind him, with the neglect or contempt of all other things. So it is uſed to expreſs the greateſt affection and favour of ſpirit that may be found amongſt Gods people, *Cant.* 1. 4. *We will remember thy Loves, more than Wine*, (i. e.) we will take pleaſure in thy loves, and embrace the thoughts of it above all things. So that to remember God, is to do that which we ought to do, when we remember we ſhould deſire him, exerciſe our thoughts and meditations ſtrongly about him, and delight our ſelves highly in it. Nay remembring doth not include onely the inward acts of the ſoul, the motion of the Will and Affections to ſuch an object now preſented to the Underſtanding: but it takes in the outward acts too, becauſe the outward behaviour of a man is ſuted to thoſe impreſſions which are within. Thus *Ahaſhuerus* his rage againſt *Vaſti*, is expreſſed by this phraſe, *Heſter* 2. 1. *He remembred Vaſti*, (*i. e.*) he talked of her unkindneſs and rebellion, and reſolved to be revenged of her, Thus the wickedneſs *Iſrael*, and her whoredom in her old age is expreſt, by a remembring of the whoredome of her youth, *Ez.* 23. 19. Then perſons are ſaid to remember any thing, when they expreſs the ſame in their actions, and do

that

that which speaks out the thoughts of their hearts: so that to remember God, is to do that which becomes a people to do, who do remember God: to have God in our mouths, and God in our lives, this is properly a remembring of God: so that the exhortation here is very full and large, and may be taken either to be,

1. Of the same extent with that conclusion, *v.* 13. and a discovery of the fear of the Lord, wherein it doth consist, *viz.* in a serious constant eying of God. Or

2. The Text is one Branch of the means prescribed to attain the fear of the Lord: which is a setting the Lord before us: the other Branch he handles before: (*viz.*) the considering of the vanity of the world, and all things in it: and upon these two considerations of the vanity of the Creature, and the excellency of the Creator, he perswades to the fear of the Lord; and he presseth them both in order to that conclusion, vers. 13. *Fear God and keep his Commandements:* intimating that the neglect of *God*, and of his ways, did arise from a mistake of the world, and from a forgetfulness of God; therefore, (*Remember thy Creator.*)

Q. *Why doth he close this title for the Lord, and to present him thus to our considerations?*

A. First negatively, not because this is the most

moſt excellent Title or Name of God: for God hath other Names and Titles more glorious than this, although this be full of glory.

Secondly, Nor that he would bound the thoughts & ſpirit of man within this knowledge of God, but would allow him to travel farther than the work of Creation, as into the works of Providence, and into the works of Redemption, wherein God hath as it were laid the Top-ſtone of his glory.

Thirdly, he chuſeth this conſideration of God, as being moſt ſuitable to the ſubject of his Diſcourſe; he had been diſcourſing of the vanity of creatures, and beating men off from them, and in oppoſition to them nothing more ſuitable to be ſet up than the Creator, that they might not fall into that horrid wickedneſs, too common in mens ſpirits, mentioned *Rom.* 1.25. *Of loving and ſerving the Creature more than the Creator.*

Fourthly, he mentions this name of *God* more then any other, becauſe from hence did follow an univerſal argument, which reacheth all ſorts of people: this was a relation which all ſtood in towards God: he might not have argued from providence ſo well: for then it would not have been ſo ſtrong to the poor as to the rich: nor from Redemption: for then the unconverted, or the doubting Soul could not have made

equal

equal use of it with those who saw their interest, and knew it in him through Christ; but as a *Creator* he stands related to all good and evil, rich and poor, high and low, young and old, *Jew and Gentile*; so that he that had least from God, had his being, and *God* as a *Creator* challenged respect and service from him; and if he had no more knowledge of God, yet herein he was to *remember* God: and if more, then not onely as a *Creator*, but in all his glory: as verse the thirteenth, *Fear God and keep his Commandements.* Thus the duty: Now the Adjunct of time.

1. *In the days*, not in a few spare hours, but *in the days*: and not in a day, but indefinitely, to exclude none, it must be a constant, a continued work, every days work: and the nights must not be excluded: for this day is made up of Morning and Evening: Night and Day do but fill up this.

2. As *in the days*, so not in what days, thou wilt allot for it, and set apart: it must not be put off untill thy latter or last days, but it must be *in the days of thy youth*.

3. Nor will to mortow, or the next day serve the turn, but it must be this day, the present day, and time is now.

Of thy youth, or of thy choyces: the word here translated *Youth*, comes from בָּחַר *Elegit*.

git, hence is בָּחוּר *Electus*, *Juvenis Quasi ad omnes operas selectus*: and בְּחֻרוֹת the word here used, *The choyce or chusing age*: the choice then runs thus, When thou art chusing a suitable object for thine eye, or for thy heart, toward which all thy after-designs shall bend, Oh then think upon *God*, and consider whether he be not the best choice.

The wise man in the Text, and the verse preceding, mentions three parts of Mans life, and expresses them by distinct termes, though in the translation the two latter are confounded. The first (*a*) signifies the New-born child. The second (*b*) the time betwixt infancy, and maturity: the same word is used to express the twi-light, or mixture of light and darkness that is betwixt the time of the night and the sun rising. These says he are vanity, not onely vain in the sense that every part of a mans life may be called vain, but vain in comparison of the third part, which follows in the Text. These two parts are empty and void, there is nothing to be expected or found in these, because in them we make no choice, but are pleased with every toy. Present things delight the childish age: we do not fix our spirits upon this or that,

(*a*) חַיַּלְרוּת

(*b*) הַשַּׁחֲרוּת

as our chifeſt good: we drive no deſigns for hereafter. But when theſe vain empty days are paſt, then comes the third part, and this promiſes ſomething: (*a*) this is a choice pretious hopeful time in compariſon of the former: yea indeed it is almoſt the onely hopeful time of a mans life: or if he loſe this time, it is ten to one that ever he prove good: for now he begins to fix upon ſome thing or other, towards which he bends afterwards all his endeavours: he ſets up a *Summum bonum*, when he comes to days or years of diſcretion: then he begins to weigh and value things, and is not contented with what he was, when he meets with any thing of a more valuable conſideration. Now ſaith the Wiſe man, that thou art come to thy riper years, and art weighing things in this ballance, in order to thy ſetling and fixing thy ſpirit upon that which ſhall appear moſt conſiderable, now *Remember thy Creatour*, put him in one ſcale againſt all them, and let reaſon and Judgement determine whether he be not to be choſen before all things; ſee whether his excellency will not weigh down all theſe vanities, but do it in the day that thou art chuſing, and when reaſon and judgement are quickeſt, and leaſt engaged,

(*a*) בְּחֻרוֹת *Juventus ætas ſelecta.*

engaged, leaſt the engaging of theſe blind thee, that thou wilt not ſee the ſcale when it turns. We have a Scripture which will give much light to this, *Heb.* 11. 24, 25. Moſes *when he came (to years) refuſed to be called the ſon of* Pharaohs *Daughter, and choſe rather to ſuffer with the people of God, than to enjoy the peaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon*; when he came to weigh and conſider things, and to make his choice, then *he refuſed to be called the ſon of* Pharaohs *Daughter*, then he threw away the Court Honours and pleaſures, but it was in judgement, *he choſe rather to ſuffer with the people of God*; he ſaw ſomething of greater importance to him. Before this time he was pleaſed well enough with Ægyptian toyes and trifles of the Court; but now comes his chuſing time, he muſt be ſetled in his ſpirit, and he weighs all, and upon a ſerious ſurvey of both ſides, he throws away the Rattles which he had played withal before, and he makes another voice; *he choſe rather to ſuffer*. Thus we have the ſum of the words, *in the dayes of thy choice.*

Here is a ſecond word to make it more full, In thy choice dayes, in the dayes that thou art fitteſt for Meditation or Action, then ſet the Lord before thee; do not put off the thoughts of God till a time when thou ſhalt be altogether unfit for him, and his

Service, till a time wherein thou wilt be fit for nothing; theſe are the choice days, and thy *youth* is the chuſing time. We have the ſame word, which in my text is rendered *youth*, read *choſen men*, 2 Sam. 6. 1. David *gathered together the choſen men of* Iſrael, *the choiſeſt and fitteſt men for action*; now thou art fitteſt for the Service of the Lord; and this ſenſe ſeems to correſpond much with the text; for it agrees much with that which is but a Paraphraſe upon theſe words, *before the evil dayes come, when thou ſhalt ſay, I have no pleaſure in them*; Do not ſay in thy heart I will try what the world will afford me now, and when I have ſucked the breaſts of her conſolation dry, and there is no more to be had there, then I will try what is to be had in Religion, what the wiaes of *God* will yield; this Religion is a thing only fit for old Men and Women that have nothing elſe to do, whoſe palats are grown old, and cannot reliſh or taſte the delights which youth affords, or whoſe memories are grown weak, and have forgotten the pleaſures of their paſt daies, theſe may begin to think of Heaven now their blood is grown cold, and their ſenſes fail them, that they can hardly diſtinguiſh between ſweet and bitter; when we have worne out our ſelves in the world, and crippled our Bodies, and

and worn out our ſenſes in turning every ſtone, and ſucking every flower which will afford us any comfort, then will we creep to our Cloſets, and cloyſter up our ſelves there too, and ſpend the remainder of our dayes in praying and ſighing; but for our youth, you muſt excuſe us; we will take this time to our ſelves to eat, drink, and be merry, and put death and Judgement, and every troubleſome thought from us. O ſay not thus in your heart, but in your choice daies begin this work; for no day nor time is too precious for the Lord.

I have now briefly opened the words, I ſhall propound ſuch Obſervations as will naturally flow from them.

1. *That every man has a choice, or chuſing time.*

2. *God expects that at that time we ſhould chuſe him.*

3. *It is a great advantage to begin with the Lord, before we are too far engaged in other choices.*

4. *Remembring and conſidering, or ſetting God before our eyes is a great Duty, and a great help towards the fear of the Lord.*

5. *No time ſo fit for this great work as the youth.*

I ſhall not handle all theſe diſtinctly, but ſhall draw them into one grand Concluſi-

on, and in handling that, I shall touch and clear up all these as branches of that great Truth which lyeth in the words; which is this.

Doctrine.

That nothing conduces more to the fear of the Lord (as a means on our part) than a seasonable and timely setting him before our eyes: A serious and a solemn calling forth of the Attributes of the glorious God, and comparing and weighing them with the vanity of the creatures, does wonderfully conduce to the ballancing our spirits, and to the setting and fixing them upon God as our choice and chiefest good, and at least to over-awe our spirits with a fear of him, if not to draw forth the heart unto a love of him. For it is very clear, that all the wickedness amongst men does arise from a forgetfulness of God. *David* renders a reason of the wickedness of his enemies, *Psal.* 54. 3. they did not set God before them; *For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them.* And in that forementioned place, *Deut.* 8. 11, 12. the Lord clearly expounds disobedience and forgetfulness of himself one by the other. I shall not spend time in proving this Truth generally, but

but ſhall divide my diſcourſe into theſe four parts.

1. *To enquire how and what of God is to be ſet before our eyes, to help forward this work.*

2. *How the ſetting of the Lord before us doth further this fear in our hearts.*

3. *How to keep the Lord in our eye when we have him there.*

4. *Why the young man eſpecially muſt ſet upon this duty.*

For the firſt, *How and what of God is to be ſet before our eyes, to help forward this work.*

Anſw. Ile begin with that in the Text, Conſider him as thy Creator, this doth ſurely reach thee; this reaches Angels, and Men, and Devils; in *In ipſa voce creatoris occultum habetur Argumentum*; look to thy very being, or to the beings of thy Creature-enjoyments, and nature will tell thee by theſe, That God is to be feared, that thou doſt ow him homage and ſervice; think what God may challenge from thee as thou art his Creature; the Apoſtle condemns the Heathen that they did not walk up to this light, *Rom.* 1. 21. *Becauſe that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God.* God complains from hence of unjuſt meaſure from his people, *Ezek.* 16. 18, 19. *Thou*

haſt ſet mine Oyl and mine Incenſe before them; my meat alſo which I gave thee, fine flower, and oyl, and honey wherewith I fed thee, thou haſt even ſet it before them for a ſweet ſavour, Hoſea 2. 8. *For ſhe did not know that I gave her wine and oyl, and multiplied her ſilver and gold which they prepared for* Balaim. And may not the ſame complaint be made againſt us. That we offer up our time, and ſtrength, and parts to the World and Sin, and Luſt, and Satan? Did they give you theſe things? are theſe your Creators? Did they give you your being? or your eſtate? or your precious time? May we not ſay to all theſe as the Apoſtle ſaid, *Rom.* 8. 12, *We are not debters to the fleſh, nor to the world, nor ſin, we owe them nothing; no, but we are debtors to God; we owe him our time, and ſtrength, and parts, and eſtates, and lives, and whatſoever we have, or are; for of him and from him are all things, to him therefore be glory.* Not to fear, love, and ſerve God, is to blot out the notion of a Creatour out of our hearts, and to forget we are creatures.

Secondly, Conſider him in his Power; This is frequently in Scripture made an argument to fear the Lord, if we look to his power over the creatures; ſo *David* often

Pſal. 86.

Pſal. 86. 8, 9, 10, 11. *Among the Gods there is none like to thee, O God, neither are there any works like unto thy works,* verſ. 9. *All Nations whom thou haſt made ſhall come and worſhip before thee, O Lord, and ſhall glorifie thy name,* verſ. 10. *For thou art great and doeſt wondrous things; thou art God alone.* We ſee *David* makes choiſe of God to fear and ſerve him; becauſe of his greatneſs in the works of his hands; he concludeth, That ſurely God was able to do great things for himſelf alſo.

Secondly, if we conſider hi great power, eſpecially over us. Chriſt makes uſe of this, *Mat.* 10 28. *Fear not them which are able to kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul, but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell.* Doth the world call for thy ſervice, or doth this or that great mans luſt call for it? If thou doſt refuſe them, can they revenge thy neglect of them at that rate which the Lord can? Can they deal with their deſpiſers as the Lord doth with his? *Pſal.* 5. 17. *The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the Nations that forget God;* Or can they reward their ſervants as God doth his? Have they the Keys of the grave, and Heaven, and Hell at their girdles? Have they a power ſuitable unto his?

Thirdly, Conſider how infinitely the Lord is above all thy ſervices; not taking this into conſideration breeds ſo many put offs; men think any thing good enough for God, the very dreggs of their time and ſtrength, the weak and the lame will ſerve him, and a little of that too; but didſt thou conſider the vaſt diſproportion that is betwixt God and thee, thou wouldeſt not think all thy time too much, nor the choiceſt of it too good for him who is infinitely above all that thou canſt offer up unto him, *Pſalm* 16. 2. *My goodneſs extendeth not to thee*; whatever thou giveſt him, thou canſt not inrich him, thou canſt not adde unto him; nay, when thou haſt given him all, thou haſt given him nothing worthy of him; thou haſt very little reaſon to boaſt, but rather to wonder that the Lord will give thee leave (ſuch a poor wretch) to take his name into thy mouth. If this conſideration were kept in all duties and addreſſes unto God, it would make us more frequent in duties, and more ſerious; it would check thoſe vain thoughts of men, who think the laſt hour ſoon enough, and the ſhorteſt hour long enough, and the ſlighteſt ſervice good enough for the great and infinite God, who ſhall one day deſpiſe their image, *Pſal.* 73. 20. *As a dream when one awaketh, ſo, O Lord, when thou*

thou doeſt awake, thou ſhalt deſpiſe their Image.

Fourthly, Conſider how the Lord ſtands upon points of Honour; his Name is very precious, and he will exalt it either in your ſouls, or upon them; although you may think it a ſlight thing, and what injury or wrong is it to him if I go on a little longer, and enjoy this luſt or that? the Lord hath made ſuch proffers to thy ſoul in Chriſt, that the world cannot parallel, and he ſtands upon point of Honour in this caſe: Muſt he wait and be put off? and every baſe Luſt, and every lying vanity entertained, and his Service laid aſide? May not I ſay as *Iſaiah* to *Ahaz*, Iſa. 7. 13. *Is it a ſmall thing to weary men, but you muſt weary my God alſo?* A man will not indure this that has any ſpirit of a man in him, that has reſpect to Honour, he will not put it up to be laid aſide, and ſo his inferiors accepted upon unworthy terms, when he is put off, who offered terms more honourable and advantagious? the Lord calls this a double evil, *Jer.* 2. 11, 12, 13. *Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very deſolate, ſaith the Lord,* ver. 13.

For my people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out Cisterns, broken Cisterns that will hold no water. It was one evil and very dishonourable to God, that his people did forsake him; it was a blemish which the heathen did not cast upon their gods; but it was a double dishonour to God that they went off upon bad and base terms. Remember all you that are invited daily to come to Christ, and yet come not, notwithstanding those glorious proffers which he makes to souls; and you that pretend to come, but come not in good earnest, your hearts are going another way; O see that you go off upon good terms, God will one day make you know to what loss you go off when you leave him, and how much he takes notice of the dishonour you cast upon him, by going off to things so infinitely beneath him.

Fifthly, Consider the Mercy of God in Christ; this is the great Argument to draw the Soul unto God; these are the cords of a man, the winning argument to prevail with an ingenuous spirit; I am sure they are strong arguments to Saints, if not to men; *Paul* knew the weight and strength of this kinde of arguing, when he ventered so much duty upon it as the giving up all to Christ, *Rom.*

12. 4. *I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

Now that I might help this consideration to its full weight and value, I shall divide it into two parts.

1 Consider External and Temporal Mercies; these are Motives; What is there that thou dost enjoy but it is Mercy to thee? And the least of all these hath a voice if thou couldest understand it, and it importunes thee to look up to him from whence is every good gift, *Acts* 14. 17. *Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from Heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness*: They bear witness that God is merciful, although I do not think with some, that they bear witness of Christ, and of special pardoning mercy by him.

2. Consider, God hath more mercy, that he might have more fear; he hath Spiritual mercies for your souls, *Psal.* 130. 4. *There is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared.* It is impossible that the true fear of the Lord should be planted and advanced in the heart without this consideration; this mercy is pardoning mercy, it is Soul-mercy; other considerations with this are useful to ballance

ballance the Spirit but this is principally attractive; this is the very door of the fear of the Lord; where this is shut, there is no way unto repentance. *Jerem.* 2.25. *But thou saideſt there is no hope, for I have loved ſtrangers, and after them I will go.* And Chap. 18. 12. *And they ſaid there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.* If God had no mercy for men; it would be vain to perſwade them to fear; if men had not ſome kind of hope, they would be helliſhly wicked.

And that I might yet advance this Motive in your ſouls, take theſe particulars.

1 He is willing to be reconciled to thee, although he can deſtroy thee, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. *Now then we are Embaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us, we pray you in Chriſt that you be reconciled to God*; he hath wayes enough to make thee ſtoop without wooing of thee, and can daſh thee in pieces when he pleaſeth: yet he beſeecheth thee, he intreats thee though he hath no need of thee, but thou haſt need of him: what need hath *God* of thee more than of the Heathens, or Indians, or Turks, who know him not? he could as eaſily have invited them as thee: at this day he invites thee, though thou art as the damned (thy nature

nature is as corrupt as theirs, and thy ſins as great as others) before they were caſt in there, *Rom.* 3. 22, 23. *There is no difference, for all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God.* O what impreſſion ſhould theſe have upon thy ſoul, if thou wouldeſt give them their full allowance upon thy ſoul in meditation!

2 He moves them to fear him by his mercies: he might require it by his power without mercy: he might have called for as much duty, and have given no encouragement at all unto it: but beloved, what heart-enſnaring language doth he ſpeak, *Iſa.* 55. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mrecy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* The Lord might have choſen another manner of ſtile then this.

3. He offers thee better terms then thou art like to meet withal elſe-where: the world cannot bid ſo fair, nor perform ſo faithfully as he doth. See that promiſe which the Lord makes to the returning ſinner, *Iſa,* 55. 1, 2. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no mony, come ye, buy and eat: yea come buy wine and milk without price,* verſ. 2. *Wherefore do ye ſpend mony for that which is not bread, and your labour*

bour for that which ſatisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that wich is good, and let your ſoul delight in fatneſs, &c. Search and finde where the Devil, the World and Sin promiſeth, and when and to whom he gives ſuch a thing as is held out attainable in following God.

4. If thou haſt taſted of mercy, thou cauſt not but acknowledge that it is an engaging thing. *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. *For the grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.*

5. If thou pretendeſt to Saintſhip, and are not drawn by mercy, ſurely thou haſt a frame of Spirit much different from the Saints of old; *for the love of God conſtrained them,* 1 Cor. 5. 4. they had beſeeching ſpirits, which were very much affected with ſuch arguments, as I ſhewed you. *Rom.* 12. 1.

6. If theſe are not perſwaſive motives, how then art thou under that promiſe, *Hoſ.* 3. 5. *Afterward ſhall the children of* Iſrael *return, and ſeek the Lord their God, and* David *their King and ſhall fear the Lord and his goodneſs in the latter dayes,*

7. Is it not reaſon that thou ſhould ſt do Gods work when he hath provided one to do

do thine? he hath ſent a Chriſt unto thee, who offers himſelf to be thy life, and thy ſtrength; And he tells thee, That he hath left Heaven for a time, that he might come down and make ſuch an offer of himſelf to ſinners; and wilt thou not leave a little of the world to offer up thy ſelf to him? Shall the kind proffers of Chriſt in the Goſpel meet with no returns? Canſt thou do leſs than offer up all that thou haſt, or art, as a reaſonable ſacrifice to him, who ſo freely offers thee himſelf in his Son to be thy righteouſneſs, wiſdom, ſanctification, and redemption? In a word, to be all and in all to thy ſoul. Canſt thou deny him thy time, who offers the Eternity? is thy preſent time, and condition, and ability too good to give out to him who offers thee more in Chriſt than thy preſent condition is able to bear, more than can enter into thine heart to conceive? Reſerve nothing from him of thy little, who gives thee with a reſerve for this reaſon, becauſe thy preſent condition is not capable of all he intends thee.

Sixthly, Conſider how quick the Lord is with ſome men to cut them off without giving them many warnings, or ſuffering them to grow up to ſuch a meaſure of ſin as he does others, as he did *Nadab* and *Abihu*; And that Gods coming to Judgement will appear

appear quick when ever it comes. 1. Though thou mayest have a smooth time in sin, yet when that time of pleasure in sin is past, it will seem very short. Ask the old man, and he will tell that his Youth was quickly gone, and Age came suddenly upon him; Is not the life past like a tale that is told? If God should suffer thee to live a full age, and then cut thee off in thy sin, wouldest not thou seem to go down quickly into hell?

2. If you compare the time past with Eternity; *God is not slack concerning his comming*, saith the Apostle; you will finde him quick enough when he comes. *Art thou come*, say the spirits, *to torment us before the time*? as some say, before the end of the World, and I exclude not that; but how did the Devil know the end was not yet? But it intimates that although the Devil had so many thousand years to tempt, yet he thought it too soon to be troubled.

3 He may be quick in that he will be unwelcome; and unwelcome guests, where ever they come, will come too soon.

4 When he cometh latest, he will come before thou lookest for him; he will come unawares, and so will be quick with thy soul: notwithstanding all this patience, the evil servant said not I have no Master, nor that his Master will not come, but he delayeth his coming,

coming, *Matth.* 24. 48, 49. this was the cauſe of his ungodlineſs. But what ſaith Chriſt? *The Maſter of that Servant ſhall come in an hour when he looketh not for him*; theſe ſuppoſed delays on Gods part, breed delays and neglects on our part, *Matth.* 25. 5. while the Bride-groom ſlept, the good ſlept as well as the bad; it is a conſideration for Saints, as well as for ſinners, to quicken up their ſpirits, and to ſtir them up to a ſerious minding of God. The Apoſtle layeth down a very good preſervative againſt this, *James* 5. 9 *Grudge not one againſt another, brethren; behold the judge ſtandeth before the door*; at the door of your houſes, at your Shop doors, at every Tavern door, and Alehouſe, as thou paſſeſt in at thy Chamber door, at the door of every day, and night, and providence, and he is ready to come and call thee to account without any warning: Not ſome Officers or Fore-runners, but he himſelf is coming without notice, 2 *Pet.* 3. 11, 12. *Seeing then that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought ye to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs, looking for, and haſtening unto the coming of the day of God*? the ſetting this day near us, is a quickning conſideration to rouſe up the Saints.

Seventhly, Conſider the patience and forbearance

bearance of the Lord; and if thou doſt rightly weigh them, they will be ſufficient Motives to this great work of the fear of the Lord, The wiſe man doth conclude it as an evidence of a wicked heart to take advantage to himſelf from the forbearance of the Lord, *Eccleſ.* 8. 11. *Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily, therefore the hearts of the Sons of men is fully ſet in them to evil,* and the Apoſtle argueth it at leaſt an argument of an ignorant, if not a ſtubborn ſpirit, *Rom.* 2. 4. *Or deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance and long ſuffering not knowing the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance?* He draws out this Dilemma with which he galls every one that refuſeth to return under mercy and patience; either thou deſpiſeſt the goodneſs, thou haſt a God-deſpiſing heart where ever thou art; or at laſt if we put a fairer gloſs on it, and the beſt which it will bear, thou haſt an ignorant heart, which doth nor underſtand the natural tendency of every diſpenſation of God, and eſpecially this under which thou art, this of patience and forbearance. Here is a conſideration which reaches every ſoul this day before me. And therefore lay it home; yon are all under the patience of God, at leaſt now.

If this conſiderarion do not quicken up

to

to duty, pray read impartially the frames of your ſpirits in thoſe words laſt read unto you: And to help this Conſideration forward, pray think in your ſelves what a baſe unworthy thing it is to make the great *Jehovah* to wait upon ſuch a vile wretch as thou art, that he muſt follow thee at thy heels like a Drudge while thou followeſt thy pleaſures, and walkeſt in waies which he abominates. Chriſt uſed it as a mighty Argument to the Spouſe, that he had waited upon her all night, *Cant.* 5. 2. *My undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night*: It was too long for him to wait a night; but how many nights and days hath the Lord waited on ſome of you? How haſt thou ſuffered him to follow thee from Alehouſe to Alehouſe, and from Tavern to Tavern, and there he hath checkt thee; and from thence to thy Bed, and from thence to the Tavern again, and from thence into thy imployment, and from thence to the Ordinance, and hath there convicted thee? and yet thou thinkeſt it nothing to make the Lord waite as a Drudge at thy heels to this very day; is not this very unworthy dealing with the great God? Nay conſider what will be the end of all this; this patience and forbearance of God will coſt thee dear which thou doſt abuſe;

abuſe; it will be ſaid when God upon account will charge thee with ſo many days Attendance, ſo long I waited upon thee in Providences, and ſo long in Ordinances, and you made a Drudge of me, made me to follow you from one Alehouſe to another, and from one Tavern to another, and here I checkt you, and in your Chamber, and upon your ſick-beds, but all this attendance was ſlighted.

How wilt thou come off? Doſt thou think not to account for this? will it not be a heavy account, when all the patience and forbearance of God will come in againſt thee? then you ſhall underſtand that ſaying common amongſt us, but little conſidered and leſs applyed, *Læſa patientia in furorem vertitur.*

Eightly conſider, Although patient, yet he is juſt; and although he ſeem ſlow, yet he is ſure; and without peradventure he will call thee to an account one day for all thy ways and works whether good or evil. The neceſſity and uſe of ſuch a conſideration as this we finde, 2 *Corin.* 5. 10, 11. *For we muſt all appear before the Judgment ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of*

the

the Lord, we perſwade men. He propounds this as an engaging Motive to the Saints, to ſeek for, and to keep a clear ſight of their intereſt in God, or to ſnch a walking before him as may be acceptable to him through Chriſt.

And in the ſecond place he lays it down as a preſſing conſideration to thoſe who are acquainted with the Lord, and with his diſpenſations, to minde other men with theſe things, and to uſe all means by perſwaſive ways to draw them out of the ſnares of the Devil; and from this argument he preſſeth to a ſpeedy repentance. *Acts* 17. 30, 31. *And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent.* Ver. 31. *Becauſe he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the World in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained.* I wiſh that this conſideration might come as near to you, as it did to *Felix*, *Acts* 24. 25. *And as he reaſoned of Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and judgement to come,* Felix *trembled*; only thus, that it may have better ſucceſs, that it may not be ſo ſoon ſhaken off from you as from him. I am ſure it is ſuch a conſideration, that if it were well and ſeriouſly weighed, it would be a great help to ballance thy ſpirit when moſt vain. This we may ſee by the uſe that

that the wiſe man makes of it, *Eccleſ.* 11. 9. *Rejoyce O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart chear thee in the days of thy youth and walk in the waies of thine heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes, but know thou that for all theſe things God will bring thee to judgement.* He propounds it to him that was reſolved to have no other Counſellours but his own eyes and heart, to the young man in the midſt of his madneſs; intimating, that if there were any thing that would prove a Remora to his ſpirit, when he was under full ſails of vanity, this was like to do it. If any Cable was ſtrong enough to hold the ſhip in theſe rough Seas, it was this, *Remember thou ſhalt come to judgement.*

Ninthly, Conſider the Lord in judging ſhall not onely judge men for ſins of commiſſion, but ſins of omiſſion alſo; and this ſhall condemn men before the Lord in the great day. We find the ſervant condemned for not improving his Talent. *Matth.* 25. 25, 26. and 41, 42. verſes. We have the Judgement of the great day paſſing upon this Indictment; not that ſins of commiſſion ſhould be left out; but firſt, either to ſhew that if men did but truly meaſure themſelves by omiſſions, there was enough to condemn them.

Secondly,

Secondly, Or becauſe it was not queſtioned among the Jews but ſins of commiſſion would be charged, and therefore Chriſt is ſilent in that point.

Or thirdly, He inſiſts only upon this as by a ſure uſage of reaſon, inferring the other; that if men ſhould periſh for not doing good, what ſhould become of thoſe who did evil?

Fourthly, to meet perhaps with thoſe who contented themſelves with a negative righteouſneſs, to meet with the Scribes, and Phariſees, and civil perſons.

Fifthly, That he might condemn that ſin of perſecution; if men ſhould be damned for not comforting the Saints, what ſhall become of thoſe that did perſecute them?

Tenthly, Conſider that the Lord in judging will not onely judge men for outward acts, but for thoughts: alſo, that the Lord ſearcheth and tryeth the Reins and Heart, and knoweth thoughts. I need not prove it; I hope it is granted on all hands; and if this be granted, it will follow as I have propounded, that the Lord judgeth for theſe things, or elſe why ſhould he ſearch to know them? But if it be not plainly deducible from thence; then conſider, that it was part of the Lords charge againſt the old World, when he proceeded to judgement with it for

ſin,

ſin, in ſuch a ſevere manner, *Gen.* 6 2, *And God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was onely evil continually*. He makes uſe of the wickedneſs of the thoughts.

1 As a reaſon of that great plague.

2 As an argument of the greatneſs of the ſin of man; and when the Lord calls men to repentance, he doth not onely invite them to leave their outward groſs Idolatries and wicked practices, but he invites them to come in, and leave their evil thoughts behind them, *Iſa.* 55. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.* Now if we did but remember that the Lord is the Judge of our thoughts, it would help to ſet a hedge about them; and till this be done, how can the great work of remembring the Lord proſper with us?

Eleventhly, Conſider the Holineſs of *God*; it is counſel from the Lord himſelf, *Levit.* 19. 2. *Say unto all the Congregation of* Iſrael, *Ye ſhall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy*; Preſſing to holineſs, he uſes this as the chief, if not the onely Argument; *for I the Lord your God am holy*. And *David* preſſeth the ſame thing in other terms, *Pſalm* 99. 5, *Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worſhip him at his footſtool, for he is holy.* A world of wickedneſs doth ariſe in mens hearts

hearts from the miſtakes which men have of God, *Pſalm* 50. 21, *Theſe things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence; thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch a one as thy ſelf. There was nothing made the Heathens more bold in ſin, than the Fables of their Poets, who faſtened all manner of wickedneſs upon their Gods; when they heard how their Gods committed adultery and Rapes, they thought they might ſin by a Law; and there is a marvellous proueneſs in men, to take up ſuch thoughts of God as may ſerve to ſtrengthen themſelves in ſin.* There is a neceſſity of removing ſuch vain and groſs conceits of God, in order to the ſetting up of his fear in our hearts; and there is nothing more needful to be ſet up than this, *viz. the holineſs of the Lord; for we frame the worſhip of God according to the apprehenſions we have of him. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, ſuch as Gods name is to us, ſo will his fear be in us, and ſuch worſhip will he have from us. If we know him by the name of his holineſs, then we ſhall be careful to ſanctifie that name in his worſhip; worſhip the Lord in the beauties of holineſs:* this leads you to the tenth verſe, where he ſaith, *his name is holy*; and therefore concludes no worſhip ſuitable to him but that which is in the *beauty of holineſs.* Oh if we did but carry deep a prehenſions

of Gods holineſs with us into all duties and imployments, how would it awe our hearts, and caſt a luſtre and glory upon all our actions! the glory of Gods holineſs would appear in every thing we ſet about.

Twelfthly, Conſider that God compares our actings in ſpiritual things, with our actings in carnal or civil things. If this were thought on, it would put men upon ſeriouſneſs in the things of God; ſee how the Lord upbraids *Iſrael* for want of this frame, *Mal.* 1.8, *And if ye offer the blind for ſacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and ſick, is it not evil? offer it now to thy Governour, will he be pleaſed with thee, or accept thy perſon, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts?* The Lord takes it unkindly and in great diſdain, when we are circumſpect and carefull in our behaviour before men, and careleſs or leſs wary and watchful toward him; doeſt thou ſtudy the frame of thy ſpirit as much when thou comeſt before the Lord, as thou doeſt thy outward garb when thou art to appear before ſome great man? doeſt thou conſult as much before hand for thy acceptation, as thou wouldeſt in a caſe of life and death with thy Governour? Thou thinkeſt when thou haſt any thing to preſent to him, it is never well enough; but any thing for the Lord, if it be but the lame

lame and the blind; a blind devotion, a few lame Prayers and Services, that have never a good leg to ſtand upon; theſe are preſented in haſte to the Lord, and thou thinkeſt it is all well enough; and doeſt thou think that the Lord will let theſe things paſs by without comparing them one with another? Is is not upon this ground that the Apoſtle exhorts believers after this manner, *Rom.* 6. 19. *As you have yielded your members ſervants to uncleanneſs, & to iniquity unto iniquity: even ſo now yield your members ſervants unto righteouſneſs and to holineſs.* It is not enough that thou art willing to do ſome thing for God; but art thou as willing to do as much for him as ever thou wert for thy ſelf, for ſin, and luſt? Doeſt thou think that when thou haſt ſerved them night and day with the heat and fervency of all thy affections, that he will be put off with a cold, ſleepy, drouſie profeſſion? Will he not ſay, See ſuch a man pretends to Religion, to act for me: did he act ſo heavily and drouſily for ſin? doth he act ſo for himſelf in things of ſelf concernment? Away with ſuch pretenders, ſaith the Lord, that will not act for me at the ſame rate that they have acted for the world, and for themſelves, and their own luſts.

13. Consider what an honour it is to be employed for God, to be called the servant of the most High. *David* envied the very Sparrow that built about the Altar when he was shut out; and wilt thou shut out thy self when God calls thee to such honorable employment? *Psal.* 84. the people of God who have known how to value their relations to God, have valued the very worst things of Christ, and the least imployment for him above the best things in the world, as in *Moses*, Heb. 11. 24, 25, 26. Moses *refused to be called the Son of* Pharaoh's *daughter, choosing rather to suffer with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*, vers. 26. *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*. And in *David*, Psal. 84. 10. *For a day in thy Courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a Door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of Wickedness*. Art thou seeking and thirsting after honour, and honourable imployments? behold here it is, to *remember thy Creator*, to be busied about him, and for him; thou art never like to get so much honour and repute at the last by serving sin and Lust, as thou maist get by serving the Lord, *Rom.* 6. 21. *what fruit had you in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end thereof*

thereof is death. You have the two Genuine and Natural fruits of sin, *Shame*, and *Death*; and to this we may oppose that of the Wise man, *Prov.* 3. 16. *Length of dayes is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour*, Prov. 4. 8. *Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour when thou doest embrace her.*

14. Consider his great bounty to his Servants. You shall alway hear them that are sincere with him, speak well of him, yea very largely of his freeness and fulness to their Souls. I might compass you with a cloud of Witnesses, if I should call in all the Saints in the Old and New Testament, to speak out their experience, (which they would willingly do to commend their Lord and Master to the world) but I shall onely call in two or three to speak for all the rest. *Gen.* 32. 10. saith *Jacob, I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy Servant: for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.* He found when he had cast up his accompts he was paid with an over-plus: it would be too long a story to hear *David* tell how good he had found God: you have him largely speaking of the bounty and goodness of God to his Soul, *Psal.* 34. up on which

he ſpends the whole Pſalm: yet while he was ſpeaking, he feared that men would hardly judge aright of this by hearing: they would apprehend more by taſting: he calls therefore upon men, verſ. 8. *O taſte and ſee that the Lord is good; bleſſed is the man that truſteth in him.* God is better known by experience than by notion; he would perſwade them not to content themſelves with hear ſayes, that God was good, but deſires them to make trial of him, and of his wayes: certainly *David* knew the force of this Argument to draw ſouls to be more and more in love with God. *Pſ.*66.16. *Come and I will declare what God hath done for my ſoul*: hearing how liberal and free the Lord is to others, encourageth us to expect great things from him alſo, eſpecially if we find him generally ſo free. We know a Servant is very ambitious to ſerve a free Maſter, and if he be generally free to all his Servants, it encourageth him to expect ſomething in his ſervice: if he hears every Servant in the family to commend him, and cry up his bounty. Thus it is with God, all that are his Servants indeed ſpeak very freely of him: *David* gives a notable hint of this. *In his temple doth every one ſpeak of his glory*: he layeth this down, I ſuppoſe as an argument to preſs this duty: he had uſed many others

others from the Works of God, he draws one from the practice of his Saints, because they do speak well of him, and tell large experimental stories of his glory.

15 Consider his faithfulness in his promises: he is *yea*, and *Amen* with Souls, he is at a word; what he promiseth he gives, and much more than what we can expect. *David* useth this as an argument, because there is no unfaithfulness in him; there was never any soul that ventured on any promise of his, that ever found him worse than his word; nay when he promised, and that very largely too, and by them hath heightned the desires and expactions of his people, he hath reserved to himself a liberty of coming in beyond their expectations, 1 *Cor* 2. 9. *Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them which love him.* If these considerations were faithfully laid together, and seriously weighed and applied to our spirits, would they not perswade us to draw that conclusion which we finde upon the same account, *Jer.* 10. 7. *Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations?* & if we do not learn the skil of setting the Lord in such considerations as these before us, we shall not excel in his fear.

The second head follows; *How this con-*

ſidering and ſetting God before us, doth make way for, and advance the fear of God in our hearts. I ſhall explain this in the enſuing particulars.

Firſt, it ſerves to ballance and fix the vain, light, and frothy unconſtant ſpirit of man: it helps much to the putting his heart into a ſerious frame by ſetting the glory of the great Omniſcient and Omni-preſent God before him; men will be more circumſpect in their behaviours, when they conceive themſelves to be in the preſence of ſome great one: the want of this makes men vain and vile in the world, *Pſal.* 73. 11, 12. *And they ſay, how doth God know? and is there knowledge in the moſt high?* Behold theſe are the ungodly who proſper in the world, they increaſe in riches; doth God know, ſay they, we are not under the eye of the Lord; and therefore we need not trouble our thoughts about him? and what follows, theſe are the ungodly: ungodlineſs in practice muſt needs follow thoſe that have caſt the thoughts of God farre from them: but would not much of the vanity of our ſpirits and the formality of our hearts be beaten down, if we could but ſet the glory of the Lord this day before us? If we did conſider with whom we have to do in Worſhip: would it not adviſe us to ſeriouſneſs in

our

our addreſſes to him? ſurely it would be a curb and check to the vanity of mens ſpirits, which doth now wonderfully encreaſe through the neglect of a due and ſerious remembring of the Lord.

Secondly, It would much help forward the fear of the Lord, by humbling and abaſing of us before him. Humiliation is the very ground-work of holineſs here: and as this work thrives in the Soul, ſo doth the work of Sanctification proſper in and upon us: therefore whatſoever doth conduce to the perfecting or advancing the work of humiliation in the Soul, muſt needs help forward the true fear of the Lord, and the work of Sanctification: but there is nothing that doth more naturally humble the Soul than a true ſight of God. This we may ſee, *Iſa.* 6. 5. *Then ſaid I, Wo is me, becauſe I am a man of unclean lips, and* I *dwell in the midſt of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of Hoſts.* And in *Job* 42. 5, 6. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of thee ear, but now mine eye ſeeth thee: wherefore* I *abhor my ſelf in duſt and aſhes.* We ſee how one glance of God did work upon them: how much more would a continual frame of beholding God in his glory, and as he hath been preſented, bring creatures down to lie in

the duſt? O therefore if you would have much of the power of Sanctification, ſtudy the Soul-humbling and abaſing-truths and Attributes of God; it is a ſeaſonable advice to our times.

Thirdly, it crucifieth the World, and keeps that alwaies under a cloud before us; and how neceſſary this is to the furthering of the fear of the Lord, let thoſe ſpeak who have much to do in the world, and any thing to do with their own hearts they ſhall find that the faſter the world dies to them, the more they ſhall live to God; The ſoul never thrives better in Spiritual things than when the world and the glory of it is vailed to it; for then the affections have liberty to ſpiritual things, and the world hath leſs influence upon them: now this ſerious conſideration of God, helps on theſe two waies.

1. By drawing our hearts to look through the Creature unto God. Or,

2 By directing us to look down from God upon the Creature. If we take it the firſt way, then it crucifieth the World, by leading the Soul through the viſible to the inviſible glory of God, *Rom.* 1. 20. *For the inviſible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and*

and Godhead; it suffers not the soul to stick and loyter in the surface of any created glory, but it strives to comprehend him who fills this and that Creature with his glory. The Soul useth the Creature as a man useth a pair of Spectacles, to look through them; and he is not busie eying them, though he looks steadily upon them, but he is taken up in eying the letters and words, and things which he discerns through them; this is the true use of the Creature to look through it, and not to be bounded and terminated in it; and the Soul that sets the Lord much before him, learns thus to pass through every thing unto the Lord, who is the center of his thoughts; and by doing so, the affections are fixed with the glory of God, and it takes little notice of the Creature which it passes by, having a more excellent object in his eye,

If we consider it in the second way propounded, then it crucifieth the world; thus it looks down from the Lord to the Creature, and so it beholds it at a disadvantage; and this view of the Creature either lessens it, or darkens it; as we see, if a man behold any thing from the top of some high Tower, it seems very small to him, what it doth to him that stands level with it; so it is with men that converse with God, and

walk

walk with God, they behold the Creature affar off, and much beneath them, and they ſeem not ſo bigg to them as they do to thoſe who ſtand upon the earth: for by this means the Creature is darkned: as we find by example, That if a man looks ſteadily on the Sun, he ſhall find a miſt upon every thing that he beholds immediately after; ſo let a ſoul that hath been contemplating, and conſidering the goodneſs and glory of *God*, take a view preſently of the Creature, and how cloudy and miſty will it appear?

Fourthly, it ſtirs up choiſe breathings and longings after God, and the enjoyment of him; the ſoul by lying on God in Chriſt, begins to ſee him as the only deſirable one, the choiſe good, the ſuitable and the ſatisfying good, and from hence proceeds choiſe breathings after him; ſee one of theſe, *Pſal.* 27. 4. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the dayes of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple*, Here was one that was enamonred after *God*, and his wayes; he had ſeen ſo much of the beauty and excellency of God, that he was wonderfully taken with it, and would wiſh to ſpend all his dayes in the beholding of it; this frame we find the Diſciples in, when they had

had but a glance of the glory of Christ, *Matth.* 17. 4. *Master, it is good for us to be here*; and these experiences beget choise breathings. *David* would spend his time not only beholding but enquiring also; beauty discovered begets breathings suitable to discoveries. The more God is seen, the more desired; he did not dream of a contemplative life as some do, wherein we should be onely busied in beholding, and be freed from enquiring; he desired no such perfection. We do not finde so many choice breathings of any of the Saints recorded as of *David*; and indeed there is enough spoken of him, to testifie him to be a man of the choyceſt affections; and one reason of this was (as I shall afterward shew you from hence) he was a constant eyer of God, he was still in his thoughts; from hence did so many sweet breathings flow; see a few of them, *Psal.* 42. 1, 2. *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God!* There is panting and thirsting after God; yet he goes higher in his affections, *Psalm* 84. 2. he longeth, yea even fainteth, and yet he exceeds, *Psal.* 119. 20. *My soul breaketh for the longings that it hath unto thy Judgements,*

ments. What manner of breathings were these after the Lord, and after his wayes! all these did flow from an experimental taste of God, and the excellency of his wayes; and when the soul hath found out the sweetness of the presense of God, and his wayes, it will no longer be contented with broken cisterns, which will hold no water,; it will not live upon that which is not bread, and which satisfieth not, but it flies to God and Christ, and nothing else will satisfie the soul, *Isa.* 55. 1, 2. *It sayes to it self, as the Lord saith, Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight it self in fatness; there is bread and water, and marrow, and fatness. I will up* (sayes the soul) *to my Fathers house, there is bread enough and to spare.* Oh, if we did but eye the Lord more, we should be more acquainted with those choice breathings of the Saints.

Fifthly. It begets an assimulating love; the discoveries of God made out and fastned upon the soul, in a constant and serious frame of eying God, do wonderfully move the Soul to love, raise very strong affections, and these do strongly carry the soul after likeness and conformity to the

good

good, which we ſee and know of God; the Soul would fain be like him, and doth by degrees grow into the Image and likeneſſe of that beauty and glory which it beholdeth in the Lord. 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *But we all with open face beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image from glory to glory.* Souls that are much converſant with God in Chriſt, and are much in admiring and beholding God in him, do grow much (although perhaps inſenſible to themſelves) into the Image of Jeſus Chriſt.

Sixthly, it makes ſouls active and fruitful; good thoughts make way for good deſires, and they for good actions; how much of time, and of the man do vain and unprofitable thoughts take up? and what is the fruit of them? *Pſal.* 10. 4, 6, 7. *The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not ſeek after God; God is not in all his thoughts; he hath ſaid in his heart, I ſhall not be moved, for I ſhall never be in adverſity.* Verſ. 7. *His mouth is full of curſing, and deceit and fraud, and in his tongue is miſchief and vanity.* Vain thoughts make way for wicked deſignes and practiſes; ſhut him firſt out of thy thoughts, and next deny him in thy works; ſo on the other hand, the eying of God feeds

and

and furniſheth the ſoul with ſweet Meditations of him, and the fruit of ſuch meditations in a fruitfull converſation, *Pſal.* 1.2, 3. *His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate day and night. And he ſhall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his ſeaſon, and his leaf alſo ſhall not wither.* He joyneth theſe two together: as *Jacobs* Ewes did conceive by eying the Poplars, ſo doth the ſoul by eying God.

Seventhly, It brings in a ſweet experimental knowledge of God, which is as fatneſs unto the ſoul. Now nothing doth ſo glew the ſoul to God and his ways, as this taſt and reliſh which the ſoul gets of them: and the ſweetneſs is gotten very much in meditation, *Pſal* 104. 34. *Memeditation of them ſhall be ſweet.* When he had ſpent the whole Pſalm in beholding the ways and works of God, he draweth this concluſion, *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet:* He would not lay aſide the thoughts of God: when he had ceaſed ſpeaking, he would then to another duty which ſhould yeeld him no ſmal comfort: and what ſweetneſs this was he doth excellently expreſs elſewhere, *Pſalm* 63. 5, 6. *My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs: my mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips.* Verſ. 6. *When*

I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. And in the connexion of the fifteenth and sixteenth verses of the one hundred and nineteenth *Psal.* you shall find delight as a fruit of meditation on the things of God; *I will meditate on thy precepts, and have respect to thy wayes.* Ver. 16. *I will delight my self in thy statutes, and will not forget thy word.* The heart that sticks close with God, and carries him much in his eye and thoughts, is never weary of beholding of him: all other objects do breed a loathing and wearinesse in the soul; but it is not so here; the longer a soul converses with God, the more delight it hath in him; enjoyment breeds hungrings; and those being alwayes satisfying, but not satisfied, breeds an inconceivable delight in the soul.

Quest. 3. *How shall I do to keep the Lord in mine eye continually?*

Answ. I shall lay down some quickening considerations, which will both engage us, and assist us in this duty, and then give some practical directions to further it.

First, consider that God hath an eye continually upon thee, and this will help thee alwaies to eye him; we know that if we are in any company, and observe amongst all the persons one who does particularly

larly obſerve us, we are engaged much in our eyes to that party; we ſhall hardly forbear eying ſuch a one as we obſerve to eye us; thus it would be with us, if we did but conſider that the Lords eye runs to and fro, and obſerves exactly all our ways, it would help us much to ſeriouſneſs, as being in his preſence. I ſhall propound a few Scriptures to ſhew you what uſe they make of this conſideration; for I am confident that there is very little uſe made of it on all hands; what manner of men ſhould we be, if we did but walk up and down as a people, who are always under his eye? we ſhould be more mindful of him, if we thought he did more mind us. *David* makes the ſame uſe of this conſideration which I bring it for, Pſalm thirty four, and the fifteenth, *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous*; he brings this unto the young man to preſs him unto the fear of the Lord, Verſ. 11. *Come ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* He lays down the duty in general, and branches it into two particulars, and preſſes all with this, *The eyes of the Lord*, &c. There it is principally uſed to the Saints, and we finde this very place quoted by the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 3. 12. *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers*

prayers. And the wise man makes it an universal argument to all sorts, but especially to the young man, *Prov.* 5. 20, 21. *And why wilt thou my son be ravished with a strange Woman, and imbrace the bosome of a stranger? For the waies of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings*. Nay, presses from hence not onely circumspection in our actions, but in our words too; to watch the tongue, to weigh every word that cometh out of our lips, *Prov.* 15. 2, 3. *The tongue of the wise man useth knowledge aright, but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness*. The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good: he is advising to a discreet and wise ordering of words, not onely to speak according to knowledge, but also according to discretion, to do and speak every thing and word seasonably, and suitably, and to edification: and this he urges from this, *Thou art under the eye of the Lord*: and what sad effects the want of this consideration hath brought forth, let the Scripture, beside our sad experience, declare. Hear what account *David* gives of this, *Psalm* 10. 11. *He hath said in his heart God hath forgotten, he hideth his face, he will never see it*. He rips open the heart of the wicked, and shews the reason

of

of his practical wickedneſs. We have the very ſinews of ſin that ſtrengthen the hands of wicked men; *They ſlay the widow: and the ſtranger, and murther the fatherleſs, yet ſay, the Lord ſhall not ſee, neither ſhall the God of Jacob regard it.* If thou wouldeſt therefore be found walking in an even path, and avoid the ſteps of the wicked, keep thine eyes upon God; and that thou maieſt do this;

Firſt, Conſider that God will eye thee whether thou eyeſt him or no: its the commendation of a picture when it is drawn ſo that the eye of it is upon thee whereſoever thou ſtandeſt to behold it: the Image of God is rightly drawn upon thy ſoul when thou ſeeſt his eye is alwaies towards thee.

Secondly, Conſider that thou liveſt no longer then whilſt thou art preſent with God, and God with thee: whilſt thou walkeſt without God in thine eye, thou lieſt under a cloud, and a damp is upon thy ſpirit: coldneſs and deadneſs muſt needs ſeize upon thy heart when it is withdrawn from the eye of the ſun, *Pſal.* 16. 11. *Thou wilt ſhew me the path of life, in thy preſence is fulneſs of joy: at thy right hand there are pleaſures for evermore:* As the Epicure ſaid, *A man doth live onely whilſt he doth enjoy his pleaſure:* So may I ſay, Thou doſt live no longer

longer than thou art with God. See what the Apoſtle ſayes of ſuch as are ſtrangers to the life of God, *they have a name to live but are dead*; or if thou art not altogether dead, yet thou liveſt onely in the root, as the tree doth in winter, when the leaves and fruit fail; who can tell whether it be alive or dead? there is little difference between a dead one and that; So indeed it is with the people of God; whilſt they neglect this great duty, there is little difference betwixt carnal people and them.

Thirdly, Conſider how thou art engaged to this duty as thou profeſſeſt thy ſelf a Chriſtian: it is thy duty as a Profeſſor to walk as Chriſt walked. *He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo to walk even as he walked*, 1 *Joh.* 2 6. If thou wouldeſt know how he walked, conſult with *Pſal.* 16. 8. *I have ſet the Lord alway before me; becauſe he is at my right hand, I ſhall not be moved:* And if you doubt whether this be meant of Chriſt or not, ſee *Act.* 2. 25. *For* David *ſpeaketh concerning him, I foreſaw the Lord alway before my face, for he is on my right hand that I ſhould not be moved.* You ſee the fruit which is from hence; ſtability in the ways of God; therefore he had aſſurance that he ſhould not be moved.

Fourthly, Conſider this was *Davids* frame,

frame; and therefore not onely imitable, but attainable alſo, *Pſalm* 25. 15. *Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord, Pſalm* 139. 17, 18. *How precious alſo are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the ſumme of them! If I ſhould count them, they are more than the ſands, when I awake I am ſtill with thee*, Why ſhould not this engage us, and encourage us to endeavour this thing? ſeeing that the Saints of old have attained unto it, why ſhould we not go and do likewiſe?

Fifthly, Conſider ſuch a frame of ſpirit is very dear unto the Lord: and a people that ſo live are very precious unto him: he ſets much by ſuch a people, who carry him much in their eye, *Mal.* 3. 16. *Then they that feared the Lord, ſpake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name.* God will be ſure to think upon thoſe for good, who think much upon him: the Lord enters their names upon the Liſt for preſervation, takes ſpecial notice of them: Not that we ſhould think that the Lord hath any need of a Regiſter to keep things in remembrance: but that the Lord might hereby (ſpeaking after the manner of men) give his people good aſſurance that they ſhould not be forgotten by him: that whoever

whoever were neglected in an evil day, theſe ſhould be provided for: theſe are his Jewels as he calls them. Now we know if a houſe be on fire, a man will run and catch the Jewels that he hath in his houſe, or the Children that he hath, and ſave them from the flames: thus will God ſave his precious ones. Oh here you may ſee how good it is to have God in our thoughts: for one thought of him ſhall not be loſt: God will not onely cauſe their prayers to return into their boſoms, but their thoughts ſhall come home at ſuch a time.

Sixthly, Conſider ſuch a frame will be very ſweet unto thee: thou wilt finde it at preſent a very choice frame of ſpirit, to have God much before thee: *David* found ſweet refreſhments here, when he could not find any comfort from any viſible thing: he then had it in his thoughts within him, *Pſal.* 94. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my ſoul*, Pſalm 139. 17. *How precious alſo are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the ſum of them?* *David* ſeems to be raviſhed with the ſweetneſs of the thoughts of his heart: he does as it were travel with a deſire to expreſs that ſweetneſs which he found in the very thoughts of God: and becauſe they were inexpreſſible, he propo.nds this in a queſti-

on

on to the Lord, who only was able to give an anſwer. *How precious are thy thoughts, O God!* The worldlings thoughts, or the wantons thoughts, or the voluptuous mans thoughts are not, cannot be half ſo ſweet unto him, as the thoughts of God are to a ſoul that ſincerely converſeth with him.

Seventhly, Conſider that the more thou converſeſt with God, the ſweeter will his name and waies be unto thee; when thou haſt once made entrance into this duty, and haſt taſted the ſweetneſs of it, thou wilt not know where or when to end. *David* ſpeaking in commendation of the wayes of God, hath this expreſſion, *I know no end thereof.* And in that *Pſ.* 119.96. *I have ſeen an end of all perfection, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.* He ſpeaks out eminently his experience in this thing; that hee had ſeen an end of the perfection of every way but of this. A man may find ſomething ſweet in creatures, but he ſhall quickly come to the end of it: onely in the wayes of God he finds a large field: there is room enough for his ſoul: he may travel all his dayes in them, and never find an end of their perfection here. He was like the Leviathan taking his paſtime in the mighty waters: the man that ſets his heart on any thing beneath Chriſt, ſhall find his bed too

ſhort

ſhort to ſtretch himſelf upon; he crowdeth his ſoul into a narrow room and place where he cannot be at reſt; but the ſoul that is buſied about the Lord in meditating upon him, has a large place to walk in; there is no end of his glory, nor of the ſweetneſs of his ways. We may ſay of them truly, as the wiſe man ſaith in another caſe, *The eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the ear with hearing.* They were not only *Davids* work, but his recreation, *Pſ.*119.111. *Thy teſtimonies have I taken as an heritage, they are the rejoycing of my heart*: And this exceeding ſweetneſs which he found in the thoughts of God, did multiply his thoughts, *Pſ.*139.17. *How precious are thy thoughts O God!* and the ſoul multiplies the thoughts according to what they yield of delight unto it, as the Bee often falls on that flower which yeelds the moſt honey.

Eighthly, Conſider how thou haſt carryed the world in thine eye conſtantly for many dayes, and moneths, and years without intermiſſion; thou didſt never walk up and down but thou didſt carry thy worldly thoughts with thee; either thoughts of profit, or pleaſure, or preferment, thou haſt carried them to thy bed, and brought them from thence again, they have companied thee ſleeping as well as waking; thou haſt had no leiſure for God, nor for a ſerious

thought of thy ſoul, no not ſo much as under an ordinance; how many vain, baſe thoughts haſt thou brought to the hearing of the word, and to other duties! there has been no time nor place wherein thou haſt been free from carnal thoughts: Oh now ſtudy to keep thy heart, thy thoughts as cloſe to God, as thou didſt then to the world; carry as much of God now with thee into the world, as thou didſt then bring with thee of the world into the things of God; it is but reaſon that thou ſhouldeſt follow God with the ſame affections and deſires that thou didſt then follow thy pleaſures and profits; with what face can we profeſs that we love God, and that our thoughts are upon him, when he is lower in our thoughts, or leſs in them than other things either are or have been? See the Apoſtles Argument. *Rom.* 6. 19. *I ſpeak after the manner of men, becauſe of the infirmity of your fleſh; for as you have yielded your members ſervants unto uncleanneſs, and to iniquity unto iniquity; even ſo now yield your members ſervants to righteouſneſs unto holineſs.* May I not uſe the ſame? is it not a reaſonable thing, and plain to the judgement of man, that you ſhould honour God as much in your thoughts as ever you diſhonoured him, and give up them to him, as you did for-

formerly give them up to ſin and vanity? now remember what the frame of thy ſpirit was when thou wert vain, thy thoughts conſtantly ſo; there was not room for one ſerious thought of God, when thou wert carnal and worldly, and ſet upon thy pleaſures, thy thoughts were all that way, and alwaies ſuch. O now think it not enough to begin to be ſerious but be as ſerious for God as ever thou wert for the world and ſin. Make it thy buſineſs and thy deſign; now labour to keep thy thoughts as buſie about the Lord as ever thou didſt about any thing in the world; remember the Lord expects a proportionable acting that we act for him, at the rate that we did againſt him.

Ninthly, thou wilt never repent of living near the Lord, when thou comeſt to dye; the time which thou haſt ſpent this way, in eying the Lord, and thy fore-thoughts which thou haſt had of eternity will never trouble thee in that hour, where thou wilt mourn onely for thoſe hours which thou haſt ſpent without God in the world, when other men ſhall tremble at the thoughts of death and of eternity, and at the remembrance of God whom they have not known nor conſidered nor yet cared to know; then thou ſhalt rejoyce in him whom thou haſt known, and loved, and hopeſt to ſee, with whom thy

thoughts have been long before; when death ſhall come to ſurprize others, it ſhall deliver thee; and when God ſhall come as a ſtranger, and an enemy to them, he ſhall be as a long-experienced friend to thy ſoul; then thou ſhalt reap the benefit of thy retirements which men called melancholly thoughts; and he whoſe thoughts were not as thine, will wiſh his end might be as thine. When *Oeculampadius* lay on his death bed, asking a friend that came to viſit him what news he brought, and he told him none? well ſaith he then, Ile tell you news. When all were in expectation what it ſhould be, or how he that had been confined to his chamber, could tell them news, *Brevi ero apud Chriſtum dominum*, ſayes he; I ſhall ſhortly be with Chriſt; this was good news to that good man, whoſe heart had been for him whileſt living, and now rejoyced that he ſhould be more with him dying; And indeed the conſideration of this did ſo much affect him, he turned all diſcourſe into this; when they asked whether the light did not offend him becauſe of his weakneſs? he laid his hand on his breaſt and ſaid, *Abunde lucis eſt, here is much light*, It is remarkable that of *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 6, 7. *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a*

good

good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith: what comfort he takes in conſidering how he had ſpent his time for God, and how much that conſideration did facilitate his aſſurance; and he adds this as a fruit of well-doing, *to love the appearance of Chriſts* But for a wicked man who hath lived all his time ignorantly, or idly, or prophanely, either doing his own things, or other, or evil things, and not regarding the things of the Lord, will he rejoyce at the appearance of Jeſus? there will be a horrible crying when Chriſt comes at midnight, and finds them ſecure, and employed in the works of the night; in ſurfeiting or in drunkenneſs. It will be with ſuch as it was with Pope *Adrian*, who cryed out, *O my ſoul, whither art thou going! thou art going where thou ſhalt never be jovial nor merry more. O my ſoul whither art thou going*! Men do generally ſhake off theſe thoughts; but when they come to die, they are eaſily confuted; they live now as if there were none to out-live them but their wives and children, as if there were no God, nor no ſoul to ſurvive; their very lives ſpeak the very language of the great Turk when he was dying, and his Doctors told him he muſt prepare to go to another world; *Is there another world when I am dead?* he thought all had

died with him; language fit for those filthy Dreamers of our days, those superannuated hypocrites, who have worn out all their profession of Religion, who say men dye as Cats and Dogs, and therefore they live like Beasts. But as an Antidote against the evil of their ways, carry this along with thee, Labour to do those things now which thou wouldst wish thou hadst done when thou comest to dye, and leave those things undone which thou supposest will not yield comfort in that hour.

Having laid these things down as considerations to quicken to the duty, I shall give some practical directions to guide you in it, and to further souls who would willingly have their hearts set in such a constant frame for God.

First direction. Have an eye upon thine own heart, and that will constantly administer occasions to thee of looking after *God*; thy wants, or enjoyments, temptations or deliverances, hopes or fears will advise thee to draw nigh to him; not considering the present frames and tempers of our hearts, makes them so little God-ward; if we were acquainted with our selves, we should be less strangers to him, That man is happy who carries so much an eye over himself as to know in what frame of spirit he is; That

man

man ſhall never defer his going to God, for want of an errant, for his own ſelf-obſervation will furniſh him for matter of duty, either for meditation or action, and the variety of change with which his heart is clothed wil checker his whole life with prayer, and praiſe; God is not like to be far from that mans eye and heart, who is not farre from himſelf, who is converſant at home. If you will be found in a good and conſtant frame for God, labour to know thy preſent frame whatever it be: the knowing of the frame of thine own ſpirit doth much conduce to the bettering of it. But if thou look-eſt not after thine own heart, but letteſt it run at random, thou art not like to find it much with God; a heart not watcht, is loſt.

Secondly, When thou haſt gotten acquaintance with thy heart, and findeſt it wandring from God, labour to ingage it as much as thou canſt to this duty; lay the weight of the duty before thee, with the excellency, neceſſity, and benefit of it, with the danger of neglect, and ſee what thou canſt bring thy heart unto, and try whether this wil not engage it to be more with God. We have a notable paſſage for our direction in this caſe, *Jer.* 30. 21. *He ſhall approach; for who is he that engages his heart for God?* God promiſes to bleſs the

desires and endeavours of such as take some pains with their hearts in this thing; *I see saith the Lord such an one, what pains such a poor creature takes to draw his heart to me, and how he tuggs and labours at it. Well saith the Lord, does he so? and cannot he for all this bring his heart to it? Doth he complain of the difficulty of the duty? I will cause him to draw near; for I have seen how he hath laboured to engage his heart.* *David* hath an expression very full, to shew how much he had to do with his heart to draw it to God, or keep it close with God, *I have forced my self to keep thy statutes.* The word that is here translated to *engage*, it signifies to engage by covenanting, or to become a surety for any one; so it is used, *Gen.* 44. 32. *Thy servant became Surety for the Lad*, so that he intimates that often covenanting with our hearts, and often covenanting for them with God, is a means to keep them intent upon him; and though when we have done all, we are too weak to deal with our hearts, yet God takes notice of those who deal most with their hearts, and blesses it unto the design which they drive, which is to draw near unto him.

Thirdly, observe those clouds which do most of all take God from thy eyes, and watch

watch againſt them, and where thou meeteſt with that which hath once proved a ſnare to thy ſoul, and a vail betwixt God and thee, walk with a holy fear, and wait for a double portion of grace at ſuch a time; What is it that doth lead thy ſpirit? Is it thy employment, thy recreation, thy paſſion, thy cares of this world, thy carnal relations or companions? it is ſomething thou meeteſt withal often, or is it ſomething thou doſt but ſeldom meet? if it be a conſtant ſnare, then thou haſt need to be alwaies watchful becauſe of that; if it be ſuch a one as ſeldome moleſts thee, be ſure thou be very careful, and conſider how much grace thou haſt need of, to wade through that which hath once ſpoiled thee. A man that is robbed by the way ſide, will ſtill remember the place where he loſt his purſe, and will be ſure to look well about him when he paſſes that way again, and go provided to defend himſelf; if we did but weigh every condition, and what temptations are in it, or may be in it, and then conſider what grace is needful to bear up a Soul in the ſame, it would wonderfully help our ſpirits to a ſerious watchfulneſs, and conſtancy. I am now to go forth in my employment, and I find my ſpirit is ready to be too eager and intent upon the things of this preſent world, that I

can hardly keep God in my eye; how great care ſhould I have now of my heart! it is almoſt every day loſt in that Wilderneſs in which I am now travelling; I am now to go to my meat, yet I find that in eating and drinking it is hard to ſet God before me; how ſhall I do for proportionable grace for this? So I am going into ſuch company where I have loſt my heart, and the remembrance of the Lord; oh now for ſuitable grace to this condition. Thus if we would weigh the inconveniences of every condition, and watch againſt them for hereafter, it would wonderfully help us againſt a drowſie dead frame of heart.

Fourthly, Call thy heart often to account where it hath been; how little with God, and why ſo; and by this means thou ſhalt find out every back-door that thy heart hath to ſteal out at from God in a day. *David* propounds this amongſt his directions to further and to engage men in the fear of the Lord, *Pſalm* 4. 4. *Commune with thine own heart in thy bed:* do it on the bed, then thou mayeſt be ſtill and quiet; thou canſt not plead an excuſe from diſtractions; then thou mayeſt argue it out, and have leiſure enough to do it; this imployment, nor that, will not call thee off. Do it on the Bed in the end of the day, not to exclude other

times

times and ſeaſons, but eſpecially do it then when the work of the day is done, then call thy heart to account, as Maſters uſe to do their Servants when the work is over; and this time is the moſt fit and ſeaſonable time for this duty, becauſe in the evening time thou maiſt finde that which in the morning thou couldeſt not foreſee; the morning is for the engaging and preparing; but the evening for examining the heart: for thoſe holes at which thy heart eſcapes from thee, in the day thou couldſt not diſcern; but in the evening by peruſing thy heart thou mayeſt eaſily diſcover. A man goes about his houſe and views it in all parts, but cannot tell where the Thief ſhould break in, or go out, and is very ſecure, thinks himſelf ſtrong: but when the houſe is broken open, and his goods taken away, he traces the Thief by his foot, and he finds which way he is eſcaped, and he labours to fortifie that place which he did not ſuſpect before: ſo perhaps it may be with ſome of us, we take a view of our Souls in the morning, and we think all is well: we go forth in the ſtrength of reſolution to keep cloſe with God, but the houſe is broken open, and the heart is gone by ſome back door, which we neither did nor could fore-ſee: the way to finde out this eſcape, is, to view the houſe

alter

after it is broken open; and by this means thou maieſt find that it is eaſier to find a gap than to fore-ſee it; and when thou haſt found it, get it ſhut, by this means thou maiſt in time find out every door and hole, at which thy wandring heart goes out from God in the day,

Fifthly, Take heed of walking contrary to thy own light; for the ſinning againſt that will bring forth curſed effects, which do directly deſtroy this frame of ſpirit which I am preſſing to,

The firſt is this; It blinds the Soul, and by this means in time it will be ſo that thou wilt want an eye to watch thy wanddring Soul, and when thou haſt put out thine own eyes, thou art like to be a ſad Watchman. If we conſult with that of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 1. 22. *becauſe that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkned*; we ſhall find that there is no ſpeedier way to loſe our light than to ſin againſt it; the very heathens ſinned away that light they had; and if thou ſinneſt againſt more light, thou maieſt loſe more; a ſmall injury done to the eye makes a man ſee the worſe for a time at leaſt, if it do not endanger the loſing it; walking contrary to thy light

in

in small things, may disenable thee to see great things for a time; labour so to walk, as fearing to sin away that light in which thou desirest to behold God and thine own soul.

Secondly, walking contrary to light, although in small things, doth estrange the heart from God; every sin seeks a shelter, but especially sin against light loves not to behold the light; we do not love to look much on them whom we cannot behold without a blush. Guilt newly contracted, and fresh in our eyes, doth estrange the soul from God; the creature is unwilling to behold him; as we see in *Adam*, he did himself; especially if it arises from sin against light, no sin doth so much separate from God as this; the sense of the sin of our nature, or the perswasion that we have committed sins of ignorance, are not such interrupters of communion with God, as the sin against light; for although they do humble us before God, yet they do not stir up such a fear and shame in us as this does, which obstructs our addresses to God; and the reason is plain; for when a man hath done an injury to his neighbour ignorantly, he can easily go and excuse it; but when he hath no excuse to carry with him, he is then hardly perswaded to draw near. I appeal to ex-

experiences of Saints concerning this truth; whether it be not a hard thing to look upon *God*, when guilt ſticks freſh on the ſoul? I am ſure *David* found it thus, *Pſal.* 40. 12. *Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, ſo that I am not able to look up.*

Sixthly, Remember that in the midſt of all thy deſigns and endeavours in this thing, that thou live not upon them, but upon Chriſt; neglect no duty which may facilitate this great duty, but remember to believe as if thou didſt uſe no means. Live upon the ſtrengthening promiſe; for it is the work of Chriſt to bring over the heart firſt to God, and it is his work to keep it cloſe with God. This is the great Goſpel-promiſe, and we are to wait for the fulfilling of it in the uſe of means, *Jer.* 31. 33. *After thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people*; And *Jer.* 32. 40. God hath promiſed to heal the back-ſlidings of the ſoul, after promiſes and endeavours, and engagements, and back-ſliding thoughts, and revolts of the heart; thou canſt not keep up with God, ſee what God ſaith, *Jer.* 3. 22. *Return to me ye back-ſliding children, and I will heal your back-ſlidings*; And in Hoſ. 14. 4. *I will heal your back-ſlidings,*

A

I will love you freely, See, what precious promiſes are theſe for ſouls to take hold of: We find how difficult it is to keep cloſe to God; lay theſe to heart, take theſe promiſes and melt them into petitions; who knows but that the Lord may do great things for thee, if thou wilt wait for him in the promiſe, when he puts out his great ſtrength, & communicates a kind of omnipotency to poor ſouls? what is there too hard for him who knows how to uſe a promiſe as a promiſe? I hint this, Becauſe I find many ſouls to abuſe the promiſes of God ſtrangely, and therefore reap but little comfort from them; they take the promiſes and turn them into tryals, and onely examine themſelves by them, and neglect the very end of the promiſe: As for example, they take a promiſe and ſay, God has promiſed ſuch and ſuch things in Chriſt to his people, as to put *his Law in their hearts*, and to keep them *from departing from him, and to heal their back ſlidings*; but I fear it is not ſo with me, I do not find theſe things in my heart, therefore I can take no comfort in the promiſe. This is a wronging of the promiſe, as much as if thou ſhouldeſt ſay, I will believe God when I ſee his word fulfilled, and not before. The Promiſe was given thee to comfort thee, and to ſupport thee, when nothing elſe could; when the

the Sun is clouded, and thou seest the want of these things, which the promise holds forth, then thou art to believe and rely on the promise; this is to use it as a promise: If thou dost this, thou shalt find them mighty through Christ, and him near at hand to help thee in all thy streights; And be sure remember this, that the use of the promise must not take thee off from other means prescribed; neither must other means take thee off from the promise; but in the use of all means herein lies the great strength, in the strengthening promise.

Seventhly, labour for an experimental taste and knowledge of God in Christ; this will be the sweetest and surest means to keep the soul intent upon *God*; *where your treasure is*, saith Christ, *there your hearts will be*; now no soul can make God and Christ his treasure, but the experimental soul; he that hath not tasted how good the Lord is, cannot set his heart upon him so as to make him his portion and inheritance; But the soul who hath had a taste from *God*, and seen what engagements are from thence to keep close to God. *Phil.* 3. 7. to 14. *Paul* quickly cast away all when he had tasted of Christ; *but what things were gain to me, those I account loss for Christ*: his senses were spiritualized, and he does not con-

content himself with a taste, but he would *comprehend*; But I follow after, *that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus*: he endeavours to that. *So reaching forth to these things which are before*, vers. 13. and he *presses to the mark*, verse 14. All these shew how an experimental relish of the goodness of God doth engage the heart to him. *David* hints thus much, that there was nothing more conducible to the fear of the Lord, than this taste of him, *Ps.* 34. 8, 9. *O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed be the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him*: He calls upon to taste and try how good God is, and then to fear him: plainly implying, that if he could perswade men to make trial of God and his wayes, he should engage some of them to fear him, from the experience of the sweetness of them: and the Apostle makes use of this as an argument to press after groweth in grace, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2, 3, *As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby, if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious*: Intimating, that it could not be but they who had any experience of the grace of *God*, and of his goodness in Christ, must needs be hungring and thirsting after more

more communion with God: if you would therefore keep up your hearts close to *God*, seek for a taste, look out for experimental knowledge: it is this that will endear God to your souls: If we did labour to set up more precious and high esteem, and honorable thoughts of God in our hearts, we should endeavour to break through every condition to him. What is it that draws the carnal heart after the world, but a kinde of sweetness which his earthly distemperate pallate tastes in it? What is it that made *Israel* long so much to go back again into *Egypt*? was it not the garlick, and the flesh-pots, and because they had tasted of these, and seen the Land, and the fruitfulness of it? they were going into a Land of which they had heard, but had not seen: therefore they often wished themselves back again: and therefore the Lord commanded *Moses* to send out some to search the Land, that they might bring of the fruit of it, *Num.* 13. 21. *And they brought a cluster of Grapes, of the choicest to commend the Land.* Thus it is with us, whilst we make a profession without experience, it is no wonder that our hearts keep not close to God: we pretend to follow God whom we know not: but the world we know, that is always with us: we have experience of the sweetness of it,

it, and what it yeelds: therefore we cleave more to that, than to the Lord, until he ſends us a cluſter of the firſt ripe grapes, ſome firſt fruits of the Kingdome of Heaven: If we have not a little of Heaven in our way to Heaven, we ſhal never ſeek it with intention of ſpirit.

Eighthly, Labour for a clear ſight of intereſt: *Pulchrum & meum, Beauty and propriety* do very much ingage the heart: things that are beautiful are (very much) attractive: but if we have an intereſt in them they ſeem the more beautiful. 'Tis a great help to conſider of the excellency and goodneſs of God and of his wayes, above and beyond the World and the pleaſures of it: but when we can conſider God in relation to our ſelves, then he is much more comely and glorious: when we can ſay not onely God is good, but My God is good. Propriety does wonderfully knit, and glue the heart (we ſee) to its object in all things: and ſo it will in ſpiritual things: an intereſt in Chriſt revealed and cleared to the Soul, doth marvellouſly engage it to him, and quickens it in its acting heaven-ward: ſee for this *Coloſſians* 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. *If ye be then riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things that are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of God: ſet your affections on things above, not on things of the earth; for you are dead, and*

your

your life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. The Apostle argues strongly with them unto a Spiritual life, and constant frame of breathing after Christ and Spiritual things, from their interest in Jesus Christ, which was very clear, and without scruple to many of their souls: and we have the same improvement made of this which the Apostle exhorts to here, *Phil.* 3. 20. *Our conversation is in heaven from whence we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.* An interest in Christ draws the soul much towards Heaven, to be constantly looking for it, and into it, and this causes the soul to bend unto it: That Soul cannot be long a stranger to Heaven, who knows a Saviour there: O labour therefore to keep your interest clear and plain, if you would keep your hearts constantly active, and yearning towards Heaven.

Ninthly, Follow thy Prayers, and consider what becomes of them: if thou dost so, they will carry thee much to God; consider in the day what thou diddest pray for in the morning, and in the night what thou didst ask in the evening, and live as one that waiteth for returns; this will be an excellent means to keep thy heart busie with the

the Lord either in a waiting believing frame, for ſomething thou haſt ſought of God, and is not yet given in, or elſe in a thankful frame for ſome anſwer of prayer. As you are before prayer to ſum up your wants, ſo after the duty conſider of your petitions, and what you have ſought of God for the day, and wait for ſutable returns: Haſt thou prayed for a holy humble heart, for an active frame of ſpirit, for ſtrength againſt ſuch particular corruptions or temperations? how doth the Lord anſwer thee in theſe things? What returns hath this day brought forth of prayer? if any, then there is way made for another duty of praiſe: if it hath brought forth none as yet, then there is work for faith to live upon God, and to wait for him untill he return and ſpeak peace. This was *Davids* excellency when he had prayed, and ſpred his want before the Lord, he had not done with them, but he waited to ſee what would become of his prayer. *Pſalm* 5. 3. *My voice ſhalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.* Here is a double care in praying to hit the mark; to ſtudy his wants, and after prayer I will not loſe what I have prayed for, for lack of looking after it; I will wait to ſee what anſwer the Lord will give to me, according to that.

Pſal.

Pſal. 85. 8. *I will hearken what the Lord God will ſpeak*; and like a beggar that comes to the door, and in begging opens his condition, preſently he liſtens to hear whether any anſwer him from within, or what manner of return is made; or as a man that hath made an adventure to Sea, waits ſtill to hear what is become of the Ship, whether ſhe came ſafe to the Harbour, whither ſhe was bound, and he is ſtill waiting for ſome good news of a ſafe return of adventures; why ſhould not men look as much after their prayers? they are their adventures to Heaven, I am ſure there are many of them loſt for want of looking after; Men think it is enough if they have been a little warmed, or enlarged in the duty, but look not after their hearts nor prayers after, whether God anſwers them or not; and this is a great reaſon of the unconſtancy in the frame of the peolpe of God, If we could but follow our prayers as worldly men do their deſigns, we ſhould ſeldom let the Lord go out of our eye; if we could but conſider our Petitions, and our preſent tempers, and compare them, would it not minde us when our hearts are out of frame? this is not the frame of ſpirit which I begged of God this day, I ſought other things of God when I was before him: ſurely this is not an anſwer of my prayers, they

they are loſt this day, for ought I can ſee; I do not finde that humility, ſelf-denial, heavenly-mindedneſs, that watchfulneſs, zeal, &c. which I prayed for this day, O did I pray for ſuch a cold, drouſie, dead frame of ſpirit as now I am under? If theſe kind of reaſonings were taken up, they would ſerve to bring our ſpirits into praying frames again when they are fallen.

Tenthly, Keep an eye and an ear open unto Providences; they will hint much of God to thee; he is wonderful in his goings; and in every condition, if thou art an obſerver of God, thou ſhalt finde a rod or a ſtaff, and either of theſe will adminiſter occaſion of drawing nigh to God; if thou haſt a deſire to keep the Fire conſtantly burning upon the Altar, thou needeſt not to want fuel to keep it alive: every Providence and Diſpenſation of God will (if well and wiſely improved) afford thee ſomething to keep thy heart flaming toward God.

Eleventhly, Loſe not the Book of the Creatures that is alwaies open before thee, and in it much of God to be ſeen: although he be not fully revealed in them, yet ſomething of him you may finde; there the very Heathens ſaw ſomething of God in Nature, *Rom.* 1. 20. and ſurely thou mayeſt read enough in the Book of the Creatures to pre-

vent

vent those Atheistical thoughts which abound in mens spirits, and are the very flood-gates as I have shewed you, unto practical wickedness; thou mayest suck out something out of one Attribute, and something of another; and although all these are too weak to declare the Father, yet he being revealed in Christ, these may be *Memento's* to thee, because they are alwaies before thee. I may say as Christ said once, *Me you have not alwaies with you, but the poor you have.* You have not Christ alwayes, nor Saints, nor Ordinances alwaies, but the creatures you have alwayes with you, these are constant Preachers, and therefore fit remembrancers. *Psalm* 19. 1, 2. *The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy work*; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge: *David* learns much out of this Book of nature, the Creatures taught him knowledge by conversing with them, and observing God in them; and it is observable, that he mentions such Creatures as are most frequently known, such as every man converses withal: he pitches not upon the great and mighty works of God in the depths, he does not send men to the *Leviathan* to inquire for this knowledge: every man cannot find him out; neither does he send

ſend men into the wilderneſs to find the *Lion*, or the *Elephant*, or the *Oſtridge*, or any of the creatures little known to men, neither does he ſend men to the Seas, becauſe many are ſtrangers to them; nor to the Earth, becauſe the Sea-man, who hath loſt the ſight of the Land, ſhould not ſay he had loſt his teacher; but he ſends to the Sky and to the Firmament; this is ſeen or known by Sea or by Land. But you will ſay, When the day is gone, then the night wraps up the Firmament in a Mantle, and takes it away from our eyes; what ſhall we converſe withal then? he anſwers this; Then thou haſt the night; that is a creature; and who-ever thou art, and where-ever thou art, thou haſt Day or Night, Light, or Darkneſs, and theſe teach knowledge; thou canſt not want an Inſtructor, or one to mind thee of God, ſo long as the Book of the creature is before thee; and this he proves, is never ſhut night nor day; but alwaies legible, and in every page there is ſomething to mind thee of the glorious God; and ſurely *David* got abundance of knowledge and choiſe affections by obſerving the Creation, and had many ſweet frames of ſpirit, and choiſe breathings from hence; and when God was about to inſtruct *Job*, and to furniſh him

with an holy and humbling knowledge, he opens to him this book of Nature, and shewed him abundance of his glory there; and although he speaks of many creatures to whom we are strangers, yet of many again which are not; so intimating that there was enough to be seen of God among the creatures most usual and best known to us, to mind us, and to affect us with the Majesty of the Lord.

Twelfthly, Compare those daies and hours which thou spendest with God, in thine eye and thoughts, with those which thou spendest without him, and try which of them do bring the most comfort; examine thy heart in thy bed, at the end of this day; compare a day wherein thou hast walked in a sweet, holy, humble frame, wherein thou hast walked with an active spirit for God, with another day wherein thou hast bin cold and dead, and formal, and careless of thy heart, and forgetful of God, and weigh the fruits of these two daies walking together, and see whether there be not a vast difference betwixt these. What joy and rejoicing was in the midst of thy thoughts? those daies and hours were sweeter than these which have been spent in vanity; wilt thou not conclude I had more peace with my spirit, and spiritual joy, and rejoicing after every

day

day so spent? yea the very remembrance of those hours doth yield some sweetness to me now when I think of them; but these hours which have been spent without God, Oh they are burthensom to my soul when I remember them; I will therefore return and study to keep close with God, in whom is all my strength and comfort, for it was better with me then, than now.

Having now finished these three Queries, I come to the fourth and last.

Fourthly, To inquire *why the Miseman directs this to the young man rather than any other?* Methinks I hear the young ones saying, This is not counsel fit for us; it is a yoke not suitable to our necks; we are tender and not fit for the yoke as yet; he might well have spared us, and given us the liberty of our youth, before he had put us upon such hard and difficult service as this.

I shall indeavour now to answer such secret Objections, and to shew the equity and reason of the Preachers exhortation; and I shall be the larger in this thing, from these three moving considerations, which have put me on this discourse.

First, Because of that common plea which is found in the hearts of young ones; they say as those did by the Prophet, *It is not yet time.*

Secondly, Becauſe the Lord hath caſt me into a place where there are abundance of young ones, and I fear but a ſmal company of ſo many that are ſeriouſly ingaged in their hearts to the Lord and to his waies.

Thirdly, Becauſe I find very little incouragement from old ones; I ſee every where that God brings in few of them, they are ſo ſetled on their Lees that there is no ſhaking of them; it is the obſervation of all men almoſt in theſe daies, that where the Goſpel is preached the ſucceſs and incouragement is chiefly, if not only, on the hearts of young ones; we ſee that God puts but little of the new wine of the Goſpel into old bottles, they are ſo tainted with their ſuperſtition; their carnal compliance, formality, and luke-warmneſs, that God doth generally caſt them aſide as unuſefull; the time is now, coming when the Lord is making good that word, *Rev.* 22. 11. *Let him that is filthy be filthy ſtill*; Let them that have cleaved to their ſuperſtitions and will-worſhip do ſo ſtill; let thoſe who have prophaned Sabbaths, and Ordinances, do ſo ſtill; and let thoſe who have ſate Sermon, proof, and Judgement-proof, and mercy-proof, ſit ſo ſtill. Me thinks the Lord is ſaying ſo to abundance in this place, who have not been moved, nor wrought upon, nor changed by

all

all the gracious pleadings of God in the Gospel, and he is now calling in to himself a generation of young ones to hear his name in this place; and therefore my speech shall be principally to you, the youth of this place to perswade you to set seriously about this work of God and your poor souls. It is to you that the Lord calls at this time.

Quest. *Why should the youth be set apart especially for God.*

Answ. For these Reasons. 1. Because God hath made choice of this time, typically in the Law, in the first-born, *Exod.* 13. 2. *Sanctifie unto me the first-born, whosoever openeth the womb among the Children of* Israel, *both of Man and of Beast, it is mine.* God hath commanded this for himself, because it is the best of our time, as the first-born was the prime of the strength, *Gen.* 19. 3. Ruben, *thou art my first-born, my might, & the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.* Now in regard of this it was accounted a great losse to lose the first-born. God puts this as an ingredient into that plague in *Egypt*, *Exod.* 4. 23. *And I say unto thee, let my Son go that he may serve me, and if thou refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy Son, even thy first-born.* Oh how do men bring this plague upon themselves, who destroy their first-

born in their youth, the beginning of their strength. It is as bad as the sacrifice of the Israelites, who offered their Sons and Daughters to Devils.

Secondly, The Lord typifieth this in their first-fruits, *Exod.* 34. 26. *The first of the first fruits of thy Land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God*: Exod. 22. 29. *Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of the ripe fruits, and of thy liquors, the first-born of thy Sons shalt thou give unto me.* Nay, the Lord was so exact and punctual in this, that he would have no exchange made. *Levit.* 48. 14. *And they shall not sell of it, neither exchange, nor alienate the first fruits of the Land, for it is holy unto the Lord.*

Here may be a Query raised, *Why the Lord would not sell these, and yet would suffer, nay commanded that their Sons shall be redeemed?* Exod. 34. 20. *All the first-born of thy Sons shall be redeemed, and none shall appear before me empty.*

Anſ. 1 To shew how much Equity and Reason there was for that Law, that it is made here with a proviso against any charge.

2 There was mercy in redeeming the one, and the not redeeming the other.

3 The Lord by suffering the Sons to be redeemed, did enjoy the ends of that Law; for they were only redeemed from death, they were still his.

Now

Now I say, as God would not have an exchange in this case, so it is vanity in any of us to think of compounding the business with him; he will have the beginning of thy strength; do not thou say, I will give him the dregs of it; say not the latter daies are good enough; for he hath chosen the first; and if thou wouldest be accepted with him, observe his choice; Observe the first Offering that we read of, *Gen.* 4. 3, 4. Cain *brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord, and* Abel *brought of the firstlings of his flock, and the Lord respected him and his offering.* One brought fruit, the other the first-fruits, and he respected the one, and not the other; and yet this was before the special Law of first born, and first-fruits, which shews that it was not ceremonial but moral, and so continues for ever, as a standing rule for a creature to offer up the first and choicest of every thing to God.

Reason 2.

This is the choicest of thy time, therefore fittest for such designation, most agreeable to the great work of the Lord; which will appear if you consider these following particulars.

First, Thy affections are ripe and flourishing; and if thou dost now give up thy self to the work of the Lord, thou mayest in all probability be serviceable to him; but in

thine old age, all thy affections will be weakned; especially those which should most of all render thee serviceable to God.

2 Thy Affection of Love, and Joy, and Zeal, Desire and Hope, which do most of all quicken souls, and honour the work of God in their hands, these will be all fallen, and there will be nothing left but weakness, and faintness, and fear, and passion, and peevishness; and how will these things honour the Lord? O it is very necessary that we should have an eye to our affections in the great work of God; for if these be lost, the glory of the work falls to the ground; for the affections are the very hands that lay hold on Christ, and the feet that run after him, and the instruments with which we work for him; lose not this time if ever thou wouldest take a time wherein God may be glorified by thee.

Secondly, Now all thy senses are freshest and quick, and thy soul most active, and thou art best able to taste of that sweetness which is in the wayes of the Lord; and although the sweetness of the ways of *God* do not consist in satisfying the senses external, neither is godliness (as the Familist makes it) a sensual life, yet when the body is decayed, and the soul weakened, as to all its exercises, the soul is not deprived onely of the relish which it had of carnal things, but

even

even of ſpiritual ones alſo; the reaſon why we ſhall enjoy ſo much more of God in Heaven than we do, or can do here, is, because our bodies ſhall be fitted to our ſouls; we ſhall have none of the incumbrances of fleſh, and weakneſs, and indiſpoſition through ſickneſs and old age, which now do hinder us; and therefore it muſt needs follow, that the better the ſoul is Organized and fitted for action, through the ſtrength and vigour of all the faculties, the more capable it is of communion with God, and of taſting the ſweetneſs that is in his wayes. Bring a man that is ſick and weak never ſuch precious and pleaſing meat and drink, he affects them not, becauſe his palate is weak, and he cannot taſte the ſweetneſs that is in them. Old Age is the ſickneſs of Nature; then ſhe begins to be feeble, and it cannot be expected that the ſoul can act at the ſame rate either in Naturals, or Spirituals, which it did when it was in the middeſt of its ſtrength; A man cannot do ſo much work when his aſſiſtants and ſervants are all gone from him, as he could when he had them all at command; the ſoul wants many of her attendants, they are dead, or drouſie, and very uſeleſs: every member of the body, and every faculty of the ſoul is very weak and lame, and there is little expected from them. If ever thou wouldeſt

highly put a difference between the wayes of God, and the wayes of sin, and thou wouldest relish the sweetness that is in following the Lord Jesus, make tryal in thy youth, whilst thou art in the prime of thy strength; for the breasts of his consolation are full, and require much strength to draw them, they are of so pure and spiritual a nature. If thy senses were so quick and comprehensive as *Adams* were in innocency, yet there is more than enough in the Lord Jesus, and in his wayes to exercise them, and to satisfie them; *David* speaks largely of his experience in this thing, *Psal.* 19. *They were sweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb.* and in Psalm one hundred and nineteen, he commends them beyond all other good things, and he speaks elsewhere of this; he sets out the fulness and variety of sweetness which the wayes of *God* afford by this expression, *Rivers of pleasure*, Psal. 36. 8. *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures.* We may have another much like to this, Psalm 16. 11. *In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* O what a great mistake is there amongst many, who refuse to give their youth to the Lord, because they cannot spare that from their pleasures; they think that the devoting that

unto

unto the Lord would be the ſpoil of it; let not Satan delude any of your poor ſouls thus any more; there are pleaſures at Gods right hand, and rivers of pleaſure for ſouls to drink of who follow Jeſus Chriſt, when the ſummer brooks which Satan lead you to will all be dried up. Let them not draw you off from God, with a pretence that there is no pleaſure to be had in him; but when ever he draws you after pleaſures, tell him how that you have heard, That the ways of God are ſweet, and that you will make tryal of them, whether they are ſo or not, whilſt you are in the midſt of your ſtrength, and beſt able to diſtinguiſh betwixt ſweet and bitter, good and evil; and when thou haſt gotten but a taſte of the ſweetneſs of the wayes of God, thou wilt have an anſwer at hand for him; when he comes and tells thee, Thy youth is fitteſt for pleaſure, tell him then it is fitteſt for God at whoſe right hand are pleaſures everlaſting, which thou wilt never more exchange for his deceivable luſts.

Thirdly, Now thou haſt an opportunity to deny thy ſelf for Jeſus Chriſt, and to commend the wayes of God unto the world, and to ſet a high price upon them for the enjoyment of Chriſt in them, when thou doſt deny the vain pleaſures of ſin when thou mayeſt enjoy them; what a low value doſt thou

ſet

ſet upon Jeſus Chriſt, and the wayes of the Lord, when thou wilt follow him at no other time, but in that which in thy own judgement is fit for nothing elſe, although in truth it is moſt unfit for that? This cannot be an act of ſelf-denial, when we will never come to God till we have nothing to deny, or part withal for him; thou canſt not then ſay that thou forſakeſt anything of the world to come unto Chriſt, when it hath already forſaken thee; what pleaſure wilt thou deny to follow God in thy old age, in that day when thou ſhalt ſay, I have no pleaſure in it? here will be no room left for ſelf-denial in many things, but now it lies in the way evidently to make out thy ſelf-denial; for now whilſt thou art in the ſtrength of thy dayes, and many temptations to enjoy the world, and many vvayes to enjoy it alſo; novv to renounce all, and come into Chriſt, will be an eminent act of ſelf-denial; all men vvill ſay, loe here is one vvho hath left all to follovv the Lord; and vvill not this beget an high eſteem in men of the vvayes of God, vvhen they ſhall ſee thee prizing it above all profits, and pleaſures and preferments, and Friends, and Companions? vvhen they ſee thee caſting theſe under foot, vvhen they are to be enjoyed; vvill they not ſay, Surely there is much ſvveetneſs in the vvays of God, that this man denies himſelf in all theſe things

things to follovv them; If ever thou vvouldeſt honour the vvayes of God, and ſet them up high in the hearts of men, and be eminent in this act of ſelf-denial, loſe not thy youthful dayes, but begin to follovv the Lord Jeſus vvhilſt the vvorld and the pleaſure of it are followving thee; ſo ſhalt thou be a true Diſciple of the Lord Jeſus.

Fourthly, The vvork is great vvhich thou art called to, and therefore fitteſt for thy youth; vve knovv that vve uſe to ſingle out the morning for the choiceſt employment, vvhich requires greatneſs of ſtrength, and parts; and truly the vvork of the Lord is in this ſenſe a morning vvork; for it vvill call for the vigor and ſtrength of thy affections; *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, Luk.* 13. 24. *Phil.* 3. 14. *I preſs toward the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* Men do vvonderfully miſtake the vvays of the Lord, vvhen they think that the ſleeping doating age is good enough for him; truly this is according to thoſe conceits and fancies vvhich they have of the vvorſhip of God; and their thoughts are ſo lovv, becauſe they are ſo much ſtrangers to it, but if ſuch ſouls vvere ſet truly about the vvork, they vvould find it ſo much above the ſtrength they have (when ſtrongeſt) that they would eaſily be convinced of the vanity of making delayes, and putting it off till a

time

time when they must expect less. Oh what folly is there in mens hearts! and how little reason will those delayers have to stand by them at the last day? when they delay the work because it seems hard and difficult, and yet they put it off to a time wherein it must needs be much harder than now it is. Friends, take heed of this folly, it is too common amongst us. It is against reason and against our practice in all other things, and if the devil had not a great power over men, this deceit of the heart would be discerned; we see men will not do so in other things; they will study the season proper to every work but this of their souls: the Husbandman will not put off his Summer work till Winter, nor his Winter work till Summer; he will chuse to do the work that is most painful and laborious before the heat of the day: if a man walk by the Sea wall and find a small breach that is made in upon the Land, he will not pass it by, and say let it alone until the next week or year; for sayes he, it will grow much bigger by that time; he will not make delays when he is sure that delays will make more work; let us but study the seasons for our souls as they do; let us do every thing to the best advantage; the work is great, begin when thou wilt, but the longer it be before thou begin it, the more difficult thou wilt find it, and the lesse

strength

ſtrength thou wilt have to go through with it; therefore begin in thy youth.

Fifthly, It is a long work, and therefore calls for the morning of thy Age; he that would run this race ſhould ſet out early. We know if a man have a long Journey to go, or a Race to run upon ſome forfeiture, he will covet for as much of the day as it is poſſible for him to enjoy, he will ſet out very early by the firſt appearance of day; if we did but know what it is to be a Chriſtian, we ſhould not think our day too long to ſpare any of it from our work, eſpecially of our choiceſt hours.

Three things makes this work long.

1. Want of knowledge, we have many things to ſeek after.

2. Want of experience in thoſe things which we have in notion.

3 Much imployment.

Firſt in regard of knowledge, we ſhall begin betimes; how many things are we ignorant of? the Goſpel is full of Myſteries, & the Worſhip of God is a Myſtery, and we know but in part when we know moſt, and yet may alwaies know more than we do; If we conſider our natural eſtate, we are ignorant of every truth of God as it is in Jeſus; we know nothing aright, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. *The natural man cannot perceive the things of God*; therefore ſeeing there is no true knowledge

of

of God, and of Spiritual things, till we set our faces and hearts Heaven-wards, we had need begin betimes. If we look to our after-knowledge, which is a fruit of conversion, it is so weak and imperfect, and there is so much ignorance in so many of the things of God, that then we should say, O that we had begun sooner with God! then might we have been teachers of others, whereas now we have need to be taught the very principles of Christ; if we begin at the first hour of the day, yet we shall find the work so long in this regard, that when the night comes we shall acknowledge that the day hath not been large enough, or we have not been active enough to be acquainted with every Mystery of the Lord, and we must leave some things to learn when we come to Heaven.

Secondly, in respect of Experience; how many things are there which we get in notion, which we are content withal, and seek not for the experience of it? this requires much time to seek after the experience and power, and conformity to those truths of which we are convicted in our judgements; thou mayest learn many things in a Notional way in a short time; but experience of all these things is not so soon obtained. The Physician reads many things and they seem rational to him; but this

seems

ſeems not enough to him until he gets ſome experience of theſe things, till he hath made trial of them; it will require much time for thee to put every truth ſo to the touch-ſtone as to be able to ſpeak to it from thine own experimental Knowledge, and this will adviſe thee to begin betimes with the Lord.

Thirdly, In regard of imployment; O when thou comeſt into Chriſt, thou wilt find abundance of work to do, too much for the little time that is allotted thee; if thou lookeſt upon thoſe without, to labour to bring them into Chriſt, thy bowels will ſound toward them, and thou will ſay in thy heart, O that I had come in ſooner, that I might have pitied thoſe poor ſouls ſooner; in regard of thoſe who are within, there are ſome weak, and they call for thee, *When thou art converted, then ſtrengthen thy brethren*; ſome are doubting, and call for thee to comfort them, ſome are fallen, and call for thee to reſtore them; yea the ſtrong as well as the weak have need of thee; O there is work enough for thee to do amongſt the Saints, if there were none in the world, if thou hadſt *Methuſalem*'s Age to ſpend. And ſeeing Jeſus Chriſt hath ſo much work for poor ſouls to do, is it not pitty that thou ſhouldeſt defer thy coming, when the Maſter hath need of thee! O that we did but love our work as well as that precious Ser-

vant

vant of Christ did, who wept when he was to dye, because he should go where he should do no more work, but should onely receive his wages! if he mourned that he was to leave working so soon, we should much more lament that we began so late.

Reason 3.

Because this is thy chusing time, the day of thy choice; this is thy Market day, and thou art now about to provide for hereafter. As the Husband-man when he goes to a good Fair, or Market, he goes up and down to see where he may buy a good penniworth, that he might stock his ground for the year following: and when he hath once bought for his turn, he looks not how the Market goes, nor what others do; now thou beginnest to leave the childish age, which is trifled away with toyes, and thou beginnest to look towards hereafter, what thou mayest fasten upon? what will be most beneficial for the time to come; now thou bethinkest thy self how to spend thy ensuing dayes; be very wary, take heed thou dost not make too rash a choice; walk up and down the Market, and see who sells the best penniworth; Satan will have his shop open betimes, and he will offer the great things it thou wilt believe him, thee pleasures, profits, and honours of the world; but take heed of a hasty Market; have an eye to Jesus Christ,

Christ, and see what terms he offers to thee, whether he do not offer better things upon better terms: and to press this duty close upon thee.

First, Consider how dangerous it is to forget God now in thy chusing time, lest afterwards pre-engagements to the world blind thee that thou see not, or prejudice thy spirit that thou see with disadvantage; or bias thee that thou wilt not follow what thou seest of the things of God; when once the creature is engaged in his Affections to a former choice, it is a very hard thing to draw such a soul off upon any terms almost; if thou losest this time of thy youth, thou losest thy choicest opportunity, because now thou mayest be free in respect of many engagements which hereafter may draw thee from following of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, Consider that if thou shouldest be brought over unto the Lord afterwards, when this chusing time is past, it will be hard to convince men that thou followvest him out of choice; they vvill rather judge it to be out of necessity, if thou lookest not tovvard God till thy old age, they vvill say it is because thou hast nothing else to do at this time; or they vvill say it is the custom of old folks to be a little religious; but if thou givest up thy youth to follow the Lord, all men vvill say thou dost it out of choice; This man

hath

hath choſen the way of the Lord, who had many other ways to go, and all pleaſant, but he forſakes them all, and hath choſen the wayes of God; it was a clear evidence that *Moſes* choſe the Lord and his wayes, when he imbraced them at ſuch a time as he might have injoyed the honours and priviledges of *Pharaohs* Court; *By faith* Moſes *when he was come to years, refuſed to be called the Son of* Pharaohs *daughter; chuſing rather to ſuffer with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.* If he had ſtaid till he had been old, and till the Court had been weary of him, and had caſt him out, there would have been no notice taken of his cloſing with *Iſrael*: but now it appeared plain an act of choice.

Thirdly, We find that men have ſeldome above one chuſing time; and if this time be loſt, and they not ſetled upon God, it is a thouſand to one but they are loſt; although the Lord may and does call ſome at every hour, yet he calls moſt at the firſt, few at the third, fewer at the ninth, and feweſt at the laſt. *Matth.* 20. 1, 2, 3, *He went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his Vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he ſent them into his vineyard; and he went out about the third hour, and ſaw others ſtanding idle in the Market-place.* We find he went out intentionally to hire

the

the first time, but the rest seem brought in casually; And therefore Christ called one at the last hour, that none should despair, and he called but one, that none upon that might presume; take hold of youth while it is in being; old age may never be to thee; or if it be, yet thy heart may be settled in youth, and hardened to thy former engagements which have caused thee to pass by the Lord, and it is a wonder if he do not pass by thee afterwards; we find very few brought in to God in the last hour of the day.

Reason 4.

Because delays are full of dangers, we find few of those many who allot the Lord a time for this great work hereafter, that do ever see those days they speak of; the Lord ordinarily surprizes such souls as are full of To morrows; How did the Lord seiz upon that evil servant at unawares, who said but in his heart, *The master delays his coming*, nay the Lord doth not onely declare that such men may be surprised (which were danger enough in running, but the hazard) but he hath allotted them this punishment for their dilatory thoughts, that they shall surely be surprised; all those delaiers who are resolved to put off God and Conscience to such a time and such a year, may read the Judgment pronounced against them in that of *Matth.* 24, 48, 50, 51. and if that

evil

evil Servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his comming, the Lord of that Servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the Hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Reason 5.

Because delayes are full of folly; it is folly to be careless and full of delayes, because our times are full of uncertainty; it is folly which thou wilt not be guilty of for the Body, and yet thou wilt profess it for thy Soul; if thou wert sure a Thief would come such a night, though thou didst not know the hour, thou wouldest watch every hour; but thou art not so wise for thy soul, thy uncertainty makes thee careless; because thou dost not know the moneth, nor year when God will call to Judgement, therefore thou sayest in thy heart, not this week, nor this moneth, nor this year, and from hence thou growest careless, and art surprised in the conclusion.

Secondly, it is folly to set a time to our selves which God hath not set before us, he sayes *To day if thou wilt hear my voice*, and thou sayest, I will not hear till to morrow; he bids thee *remember him in thy youth*, and thou sayest, old age shall serve the turn; what folly is this, to set a time that thou hast

no

no assurance of? God hath made thee no promise that thou shalt enjoy to morrow, neither hath he made thee any promise of acceptance to morrow; but what saves the Scripture, 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. *To day is the accepted time.*

Reason 6.

Delayes are full of deceit; a delaying heart is very deceitful, it is a very gull, a cheat, it speaks one thing, and intends another all the while, its excuses and delayes are alwayes deceitful; it will appear thus.

1 It deceives thee, in telling thee that the work is easie, and thou mayest do it as well in old age; and therefore why needest thou trouble thy self so early, and lay out the prime of thy dayes in it, when the dregs of it will serve as well, Here it lies; for if thou settest about this work, thou wilt finde it a hard work, which, as I have shewed, will call for all thy strength.

2 It deceives thee, whilst it tells thee, that thou art willing to the thing, but not to the time; as if the difference were not so great betwixt God and thy soul as indeed it is: Thy heart tells thee that thou art willing to come to Christ, and thou approvest of and lovest the wayes of God; only thou canst not yet close with them, when indeed it is the very thing as well as the time which thou dost dis-relish, and the enmity against

God

God and his vvayes is discovered by thy delays, as well as in others by a gross denial; were not they who stayed behinde upon pretended occasions as well judged enemies? *Luke* 14. 16. as they who said plainly, that they would not have Christ to reign over them? And if ever thy heart were reconciled to the ways of God, thou wouldest make no delays; the thing being once resolved in good earnest; thou wouldest not at all stick at the time.

3 It deceives thee by concealing thine inability from thee; which is daily increased by thy delaies: the longer thou deferrest thy comming in to Christ; the weaker thou groweſt in soul and in body. *Qui non est hodie. &c.*

4 There will be no end of delays; the same reason thou hast to put off seriousness from thy soul to day, thou wilt have to morrow; thou sayest to morrow will be time enough, and thou wilt say so again to morrow; if thou hadst an eternity to spend here, thou wouldest spend it in delayes; *Modo & modo non habent modum.*

Reason 7.

Thou wilt have one temptation the less to answer, if thou comest in now to Christ; and this is ordinarily one, it is now too late; he that said alwaies before, It was too soon, will as soon as thou art in good earnest tell

thee,

thee, that it is too late; therefore labour to prevent him in this, let him not have any room for such an Objection against thy Soul; some souls have smarted bitterly under it. Make no more dalayes, nor put-offs; for the fewer of these thou makest, the less hath he to build upon. When ever he comes to perswade thee to defer the work of the Lord a little longer, Consider, his design; if thou yield to this Temptation, he will build a Battery upon it against thy Soul, if ever it look really toward Christ; and he will terrifie thee most with those delayes which he hath tempted thee to. It hath been a hard block to some poor souls to get over. Oh, it is now too late; oh, if I had come into Christ at such a time, when I was under such and such Convictions; at such a Sermon, or such a Providence, if then I had hearkned to Christ, I had been accepted; but now I fear it is too late. O take heed that thou doest not administer occasions to Satan to lay such a block in thy way; begin betimes, and the sooner thou dost begin, the less advantage will he have in this point against thy soul.

Reason 8.

Because we find that those who have begun with God in their youth, have attained to a great eminency in the things of the Lord. As to begin with *Moses*, he began with God in his youth, in the prime of his age.

Heb. 11. 24. *By faith* Moſes, *when he came to years, refuſed to be called the Son* of Pharaohs *daughter?* and to what height did he grow in knowledge and experience of the Lord? How did God honour him; in giving him ſuch a wonderfull diſcovery of himſelf in thoſe days? *Exod.* 33. 11, 19. *And the Lord ſpake to Moſes face to face, as a man ſpeaketh to his friends.* ver. 19. *And he ſaid, I will make all my goodneſſe paſſe before thee; and I will proclaime the name of the Lord before thee.* God ſeems to grant him as much as he was capable of on this ſide Glory, as much as he could bear, if God ſhould have let out more of his glory to him, it would have conſumed him.

Secondly, See how *Samuel* proved in the waies of the Lord? with what repute and honour he lived and died amongſt the people of God? and he was one of theſe early beginners with God? we find that the Lord called him betimes and eſtabliſht him for a Prophet in his very Child-hood, as you may ſee at large in the firſt book of *Samuel*, chap. 3. Now how eminent this man proved with God, in regard of his long acquaintance with God; he proved great in prayer, he was a prevailer with God, and therefore *David* names him as the great Artiſt this way, *Pſal* 99 6. Samuel *amongſt thoſe that call upon him.* And the Lord honoured

noured his memory for this, when he was in the Grave, Jerem. 15. 1 *Though* Moses *and* Samuel *stood before me*; the Lord brings in these two early beginners together, and sayes, If any were like to prevail with me, it were these my two old friends, who took up acquaintance with me from their youths. We know friendship is dearest and most engaged when it is begun in Childhood, and continued to an old friend.

Time would fail to tell you of *David* how eminent he was for God, who grew wiser than his Teachers, and how soon he began with the Lord. And of *Jeremiah*, and *John*, who were sanctified in the Womb, and what measures of knowledge and grace they had; and of *Timothy*, who was instructed from a child in the Scriptures, and how serviceable he proved to the Churches; surely it is not in vain that the Scripture takes so much notice of the comings in of so many Saints, and that we find the most eminent of them are mentioned, and to have given up their youth to God. And if we would go by circumstances, we should find that many others of the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, if not all, were called in to give up their names to God very early; I am sure it is enough to engage us to begin with him in the morning, if we would attain to that height they did.

Reason 9.

There is a promise to those that seek the Lord early, but there is none to those that seek him late; mistake me not, I would not weaken the hand of any, if God move any old sinner to look after Christ. I do not say but that there is a promise for them that return at whatsoever time it be; a promise to him as a seeker, but not a particular promise to him as a late seeker. But there is a promise particularly to the early seeker, *Prov.* 8 7. *They that seek me early shall find me*; And from hence the Apostle presses men to take hold of the opportunity, *Heb.* 3. 7. 13. *And to day if you will hear his voice; but exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, least any of you be hardned through the deceitfulness of sin*, and the Prophet presses the very same; *Isa.* 55. 6. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near*; the Lord is near then in the Promise, and especially to you young ones; because he is near you in the particular Promise, whereas he is near others but in the general promise. O therefore be perswaded to seek him whilst he is thus near to you.

Use of Caution to young ones not to lose this time; for we may say of youth as *David* sayes of the soul, *What shall a man give in exchange for it?* there is no price or

ran

ranſome ſufficient to redeem it from God; the following dayes, if thou were ſure to enjoy them and give them up to the Lord, are not a valuable conſideration for thy youth, nor will any time be ſo acceptable to God as this. See how the Lord prizes youthful affections, *Jer.* 2. 2, 3. *Go and cry in the ears of Jeruſalem, ſaying, Thus ſaith the Lord. I remember thee, the kindneſs of thy youth, the love of thine eſpouſals when thou wenteſt after me in a wilderneſs, in a Land that was not ſowen.* verſ. 3. *Iſrael was holineſs to the Lord and the firſt fruits of his increaſe, all that devour him ſhall offend, evil ſhall come upon them ſaith the Lord.* Times which may follow are either uncertain or not acceptable with God, or not ſo advantagious to this work, *John* 9. 4. *I muſt work the works of him that ſent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work.* Night will come, and then there will be no working; evening will come, and it will be bad working, but it is good working whilſt it is day, whilſt it is noon-day, when thou haſt light upon light, a double light; the *Hebrews* expreſs noon by ſuch a word that ſignifieth two lights.

All theſe conſiderations laid together may help us to draw this Concluſion, *Lament* 2. 27. *It is good for a man to bear his yoke in his youth.*

2 To old ones who have neglected, and loſt this precious time of their youth; O go home and mourn over this great loſs, the loſs of your precious and choyſeſt time of your youth; go to your Cloſets, and weep over your deceitful delaying hearts, which have cheated you ſo often, and put ſo many ſtumbling-blocks in your wayes, that you have not found a time to be ſerious for God to this very day: You had need go and ſhut your doors upon you, and beg earneſtly of the Lord, that he would accept of you at laſt; and be very ſerious, and never give the Lord over until he hath given you ſome evidence of owning thoſe dregs and relicks of the time, and ſtrength which Sin and Satan hath left you; you have need of abundance of grace to bring you over, and to accept of you when God muſt go in an extraordinary way of grace toward your ſoul.

Secondly, Redeem the time that is left, let none of that be thrown away after the reſt, 1 *Pet.* 4. 3. *For the time paſt of our lives may ſuffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in laſciviouſneſs, luſt, exceſs of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable Idolatries.*

1 AP 57

The end of the Firſt Part

NOW IF EVER.

OR AN

APPENDIX

TO THE

Young mans *Memento*.

Delivered

By Jo. CHISHULL,

At *Tiverton* in *Devon*.

Heb. 3. 13.

Exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, leſt any of you be hardned through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.

Iſa. 55 6. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.*

London, Printed by *W. B.* and are to be ſold by *F. Egleſfield*, at the Marygold in S:. *Paul's* Church yard. 1658.

BRITISH MUSEUM

To the Right Worſhipfull Sir *Copleſtone Bampfield*, Baronet

SIR,

I *Have preſented theſe few Sermons to you; not for their ſhelter (for a Patrons name cannot defend the Author from the cenſure of the Reader) but for your advice. Although you cannot want my counſel (having injoyed many advantages above others, in education, of Godly counſel, and good Examples) yet your age does, ſeeing you are now in the day of your choices: and if you need none, yet I owe to your ſelf and family, whatever may be conducible to your or to their good; the engagements which former daies have layd upon me to ſerve the Family of* Poltimore, *are as freſh upon me as ever, and I ſhould gladly embrace any opportunity of manifeſting this.*

The Stock of Prayers which your dear father (whoſe memory is precious among the Lords people) hath put up for you, the many Counſels which you have received from your Governours and Tutors, in former and latter years, with the continued Prayers, Exhortations, and Examples of ſome very near you, give great hopes that you may ſtand up in your honoured Fathers place, and with his Title and Eſtate inherit that intereſt which he had in the hearts of them that fear the Lord. If what I have tendered to you, further or quicken you unto this I have my end and my joy.

Above all things beware of delaies, the danger of thoſe you ſhall eaſily find by peruſing of what follows; vouchſafe to read it ſeriouſly, and accept kindly, as it is offered out of faithfulneſs and affection, by him who is, Sir,

Your obliged Servant,

Jo. Chilcot.

Tiverton, Aug. 24. 1654.

Now if Ever.

LUKE 19. 42.

Saying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.

THeſe words are ſome of thoſe which the Lord Chriſt ſighed out, when he beheld and conſidered the ſad and lamentable condition of careleſs *Jeruſalem*: His ſpeech is broken, as if he had ſpoken out one, and wept out another part of his mind; but ſuch imperfect language ſerves to expreſs ſorrow to the life; It is eaſie to ſee the heart of Chriſt through theſe Lines, and you cannot but ſee him here to be a Man of ſorrow. Neither are the ſtreams more viſible than the Fountain from whence they did ariſe. you need not go far to ſearch for the Head and riſe of this River; look but upon the eye of Chriſt, ſee where it is fixed, and you ſhall not more eaſily ſee that he weeps, than for whom he weeps; it was for *Jeruſalem*, who had ſlighted and forſaken her own mercies, out-lived the day of

her

her Peace, and was now under a double sentence of death, *viz.* Spiritual and Temporal; and although *Jerusalem* rejoyced in her prosperity, yet he that saw what was written over her head, drops these few words (interrupted and broken, through abundance of tears) to shew, that the ruine and misery of Her and of poor sinners goes near his heart.

Many things have been proposed and handled from these words, which I shall not now touch. I purpose to mention now no more of that which hath been spoken from them, than will serve as an Appendix to the fore-going Discourse. I shall draw up all that I intend in these three Propositions.

1 That the Lord does afford men under the Gospel day or time to make and secure their peace with him.

2 That this is very uncertain (as to us) and unknown, but it often determines and ends whilst the means of Grace do continue amongst us.

3 When this day is past, and over, peace and the thing of peace are hid from the soul.

These three Propositions are built upon these three things, which lie clear in the text. 1. *Israel* had a day. 2. This day was now past and gone, yet the means continued; the Gospel was not yet carried away. 3. Notwithstanding they had the means, yet peace

was

was hid from their eyes.

For the first of these, I shall prove, First, that God does give men a day, wherein they have more advantage than at other times, to secure their everlasting peace and interest.

Secondly I shall come to enquire wherein this day does consist. That men have a particular day, is easie to discern from hence that the Lord is so oft urging sinners in Scripture not to let slip the golden time which he calls *the acceptable day*, or *day of Salvation*; see what use the Apostle makes of this, *Heb.* 3. 7, 13, 15. Does not the Author speak there as if Salvation did depend upon the improvement of a day? Does he not strongly intimate unto them that there was no way to prevent their future ruine, but to be careful of their present day! And the Holy Ghost declares the same truth to the same intent by the Prophet. *Isa.* 55. 6. *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.* That exhortation is presst by these two motives.

First, That although the Lord was now to be found, yet there might be a time when he would not be found.

Secondly, That he might be farther off from them than now he was; they would find him at another time as it were out of hearing.

See what use the Saints have made, and what

what notice they have taken of this, *Psalm* 69. 13. *My prayer* saies *David is to thee in an acceptable time*, He that was resolved to take all advantages in his addres to God, knew well enough that this nick of time was none of the least. God loves those who take the first opportunity, whether it be the morning of the day, as *Psal.* 63. 1. or the morning of life, which is youth, *Eccles.* 12. 1, or the morning of the means, who imbrace the first tenders of Christ, which are made unto them, as those who were called at the first hour.

Further see what notice the Lord takes of this, when he answers Christ in this manner, *Isa.* 49. 8. *In an acceptable time have I heard thee, in a day of salvation have I helped thee.* As if he should have said, Thou speedest well because thou comest in a good hour, in the season of grace, when I was in the vein to shew mercy; God hath his day of salvation, and his time of hearing, and if you will have it you must come in the nick of time. You know Petitioners must wait their opportunities, they must come in seasonable hours, or else they are like to miscarry.

This may in general serve to prove that there is such a priviledged day. I shall now open the particulars of it; I shall shew you many helps and advantages that many men

now have who ſhall periſh, and many have had who are now in Hell.

Firſt, They have the Goſpel preacht amongſt them, which is the word of Reconciliation, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. *Jeſus Chriſt who is the Mediator betwixt God and man, is declared, and the way to life and Salvation by him is preached plainly, that there is no other name given under Heaven &c. Acts* 4. 12, It is and hath been often told them, that if they will believe, they ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins, *Act.* 10. 43. but if not, they ſhall die in their ſins, *John* 3. 18.

Secondly, A Chriſt is, and hath been preacht amongſt ſuch perſons, ſo he is and hath been preacht without any difference or reſpect of perſons, there is no difference put betwixt noble and ignoble, rich and poor ſtrong and weak wiſe and fooliſh; yea, no difference betwixt ſinners, as to the degrees of ſin, great or ſmall, from the leaſt to the chiefeſt of ſinners.

The Goſpel hath been, or is offered ſo to men that nothing can exclude them from the benefit of it, unleſs they exclude themſelves by rejecting of it. And that I may make this plain, conſider

1 They have the ſame conditions laid down which others have and had, who are now in heaven; God did not preſcribe harder terms to the one than to the other;

Believe

Believe and repent were the terms which one refused, and the other embraced.

Secondly, They have the same promises to encourage them, which drew them to Christ who are now in his bosom. I do not say, that they took the same encouragement from such promises; how many souls hath that promise drawn to Christ, *John* 6. 37. *He that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*? and is not this promise in thy book also? How many souls have ventured on Christ from the support which they had by that word, *Isa.* 42. 3. *He shall not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax*? And is not this a word for thee, if thou hadst any will at all to come to Christ?

How many hath that word drawn to Christ, which we find, *Isa.* 55. 1, 2. yea, such as could apprehend no good at all in themselves, who upon this word have gone without money in their hand, as boldly as if they had not gone to beg but to buy? And have not all these things been spread before many who are now in hell, to perswade them to look toward Christ? It must needs be said, that the reason why such came not to Christ, was not because they had no encouragement, but because they had no mind to come.

Thirdly, They have or had the same ground to believe that those had who believed

ved to the saving of their souls; they had the truth and faithfulness of God, which is the ground and reason of every ones believing. The faith of the Gospel is not a believing that God hath particularly elected thee to eternal life, or that Christ died for thee in particular; But it is a believing that God is true, and that the Record which he hath given of his Son is true. From hence we have this expression, *John* 3. 33. *He that believeth hath put to his seal that God is true.* And unbelief is described notably, 1 *John* 5. 10. *He that believeth not maketh God a liar.* Not that a Believer cannot know and believe his interest particularly in the death of Christ, or be certain of Election; but the Gospel calls upon us to prove these things, and infer them by reason and experience. Yet here ye must not think that Faith lies only in assent of the understanding only, but also in the consent of the will, I speak here of it only as it respects the former.

How do many content themselves with giving a general assent to the truth of the word of God, and yet they deny the great and main truths of it, and make God a lyar in the great things which he hath spoken concerning eternal life! Many men pretend that the reason why they stir no more for salvation, is because they know not whe-

whether they are elected or not, or whether Christ died for them or not. But alas, there is something else really at the bottom. They believe not the record which God hath given of his Son. If they did believe what God hath spoken concerning mens natural and spiritual estates, concerning Christ and sin, Heaven and Hell, they would look about them; But although these men believe not, yet it will appear that this foundation was laid for them also, even the truth and faithfulness of God into which the faith of all the Lords people shall be resolved. God proposed such terms of eternal life, annext a promise to them; The elect closed with these terms, and relyed on the truth of God to make the promise good, and was not the truth of God engaged as much to the one as to the other, in case they had rested on it?

Fourthly, They have and enjoy the same means. God preaches to them by the same messengers; he does not send one wiser and more learned, or more holy to preach to those who are or shall be saved; and one weak and insufficient, or less convincing to preach to those who perish: But they often hear the same word together from the same person. Christ bids his Disciples enter into the house where the Son of Man was not, as well as into the house where he

he was, *Luk.* 16. 5, 6. and Christ wrought the same works before the Pharisees, that he did before the Disciples.

Fifthly, the Gospel in offering Christ unto thee, sayes nothing of Election, makes no difference betwixt elected and not elected. It speaks not to the Elect as Elect, but as fallen, as sinners, as poor lost undone creatures, and so it speaks to thee, and to all. The Gospel sayes nothing to thee of election until thou hast past over the first work of Believing; and if thou art not elected, yet this cannot properly be a reason of thy rejecting Christ; for the Gospel made no difference betwixt thee and Elect ones in offering Christ unto thee. Secondly neither didst thou consider thy Non election in thy rejecting Christ; Who told thee that thou wert not elected? Nay thirdly, Thou didst think that thou wert elected, and yet didst not look after Christ.

Sixthly, They have such termes proposed, that if they did come up to them, they should be saved: Although the Lord hath purposed not to save some men, yet we must not conceive that God wills that they should not be saved upon any termes; he wills their salvation so far as they will the terms of salvation. If they would comply with the way and means which he hath proposed and prescribed, *i. e. Believe and repent*, they should

be

be saved; upon such terms as these God wills every mans salvation. *Rev.* 22. 17. *And let him that will, come* if he will come up to the termes of Christ; he shall have of the waters of life, whoever he be.

There is a great difference betwixt Gods willing mans salvation upon Gospel-termes, and his Electing men unto salvation. For whom he Elects, he absolutely determines to save out of the good pleasure of his will. He appoints the means as well as the end, he resolves to give faith and repentance to such, to incline their hearts, and to convert them to himself. Thus he wills the salvation of the Elect.

But he wills the salvation of all men otherwise, *viz.* upon such and such termes. If they will make use of such means as he gives them, and come up to his termes, they shall be saved; otherwise not. Nay, he gives them so much as to leave them inexcusable at the last day, and to make it evident that he will'd their salvation more than they did. It will be then clear, that had many men will'd their salvations upon those terms which the Lord did, they had been saved?

Quest. But how does that appear?

Answ. Thus, God was willing to give thee salvation, if thou wouldest turn to him. But thou didst never will it upon such terms. *Matth.* 13. 14, 15. Thou wert

willing

willing to be saved, but it was if thou mightest keep thy old lusts still; thou wouldest not buy salvation at so dear a rate as Conversion. So that we may say, that the reason why many a man is not saved, is not because God would not, but because they would not. There were terms proposed by the Lord, and there was nothing that parted the Lord and them, but their wills. As in the case of the young man in the Gospel, whose estate parted Christ and him. Was it not his will that undid him? Dare any say, that if he had come up to the terms of Christ, he had not been saved? Christ made him a firm promise upon a condition, which only parted Christ and him, *Matth.* 19. 21. And what was it that undid *Israel?* Psalm 83. 13. *O that Israel had walked in my wayes*, &c. Did *Israel* suffer because God was not willing to blesse and prosper them? Surely no; But because *Israel* did not seek it in the way which God was willing to bestow it. Had they will'd their peace in the way that the Lord will'd it, they had had it. And so in the Text, did wicked men will their own salvation, as the Lord does, they should be saved.

Seventhly, They have some inward means and helps to make their day of peace the clearer. The spirit of God does strive with them

them in his word and works, and ſollicites their return, but they will not obey it, *Gen.* 6. 3. Thus the Lord ſtrove with the old world untill he was weary. This was it which *Stephen* charged upon the *Jews*, *Act.* 7. 51. *Ye do alwaies reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt.* To this we may adde that of 1 *Pet.* 3. 18, 19. God did not onely preach to *Noah* whilſt he was preparing the Ark, but by his Spirit alſo, convincing them of ſin, and warning them to repent. Now that you may ſee how farre the Lord affords inward means as well as outward to many that periſh, I ſhall lay down theſe few particulars.

Firſt, He enlightens their underſtandings which before were wholy darkned, and gives them the knowledge of many Goſpel-truths, yea ſometimes in ſuch a manner and meaſure, that they are able to teach and inſtruct others, and to tell others what is to be done, when yet they themſelves will not do what they direct others unto, *Rom.* 2. 19. 20. Thus *Judas* and *Demas* had ſuch gifts and knowledge, as made them for a time ſerviceable to others, yet they ſerved not the intereſt of their own ſouls,

Secondly, He ſhews them the equity of his wayes, ſo that he cannot but confeſs that what the Lord requires is juſt and reaſonable, and ſo alſo what he threa

threatens, and yet they have no will to do the ſame, *Rom.* 1. 32. The Heathens were convinced that God would judge their waies, and he would puniſh them with death, and they could not deny the juſtice of this ſentence; How much more are many convinc'd ſtrongly of this, who live under a ſearching Miniſtry? To this we may adde that of *Rom.* 2. 18. *Thou approveſt of the things which are excellent.* God inlightens them ſo far that their judgements are for him, though their affections are for the Devil and ſin.

Thirdly, He moves ſo far ſometimes until he ſtir up ſome kinde of reſolutions in them, and conſcience grows ſo hot that nothing will quiet it but making of promiſes to do ſomething in anſwer to ſuch convictions, *Act.* 24. 25. Thus *Felix* quieted his conſcience when it was in a flame, by telling it he would hear *Paul* and it another time.

Fourthly, He moves ſo ſtronly upon the heart of a ſinner, that he cannot be quiet unleſs he do ſomething for the preſent in obedience to that word which is ſet cloſe to him by the Spirit of God. Thus *Herod* heard *John Baptiſt*, and did many things, *Mark* 6. 20.

Fifthly, He ſqueezes a ſweetneſs out of his wayes upon their ſpirits ſometimes, ſo that they are convinc'd that it is good following

lowing of God. Thus the ſtony ground received the Word with joy. *Matth.* 13. 20. And *They taſted of the heavenly gift*, Heb. 6. 4. They had ſome peace in their ſpirits, and comfort in the hope that ſin was pardoned, and this ſeemed a ſweet thing to them.

Sixthly, He gives them ſome taſte of the powers of the world to come, as *Balaam* had, *Numb.* 23. 10. He had ſtrange Convictions of the powers of the world to come. He ſaw that a mans happineſs did not lie in the things of this life; But there was another life which was principally to be cared for, and look't after; He knew that the people of God had a happineſs reſerved for them in that life which was more than all the pleaſures of this. He knew that they would be the happy men who had feared and loved the Lord, yet he loves not them although he deſired their conditions. He would have curſed them for wages, yet he deſired to be bleſſed with them. Thus you ſee God goes far to ſtirre thoſe who are not ſaved.

I have now ſhewn you wherein a wicked mans day conſiſteth, and how farre it does extend, to outward and to inward helps and means; whilſt theſe things continue which I have ſhewed you, it may be ſaid, It is day with them.

But as this day of theirs ſeems to be ſomewhat

what clear in respect of means; yet it is a very uncertain day, whose length is onely known to the Lord. For he causes the Sun to rise and set at his pleasure: And although we cannot by the exactest Calculations find out precisely how long or short this day is to particular souls, yet we may lay down General Rules, and make such Scripture proposals, as may help men very much in judging concerning this Gospel-day; at least I doubt not but to shew you so much as will clear this truth, or *Second Proposition, That a sinners day may end whilst he enjoyes the outward means of grace.*

Sometimes the Lord brings the night upon a people by taking away the means of grace wholly from them. When the Sun sets, it must needs be dark; and if the Gospel were taken quite away, the world would be as dark as Hell. But I intend not to insist upon the proof of this. I shall grant that a sinner may have all the choyce outward helps that can be injoyed continued to him, and yet this day may be over. And that will appear,

First, Because God may withdraw the Convictions of his Spirit from him, notwithstanding he enjoyes the word; the Lord may say, as *Gen.* 6. 3. *My Spirit shall strive no more with this man:* And alas, when God hath withdrawn his Spirit from the

the world, to what purpoſe is it?

Secondly, not onely ſo, but the Lord does hold them from ſeeing and underſtanding thoſe things which concerns their peace, as he held the Diſciples from knowing him whilſt he talked with them; ſo does he theſe men from knowing any thing ſavingly. *Rom.* 11. 8, 10. *God hath given them a Spirit of ſlumber*, &c. When God hath plainly convinc'd of the truth of his Goſpel, and ſolicited their return by many moral perſwaſions, and ſtirrings of conſcience, and they will not receive the truth in the love of it; He then does not onely withdraw the light which ſhined convincingly upon their Conſciences, but he does hold their eyes from ſeeing, or puts the truths of his Goſpel into ſuch a dreſs that they ſhould miſtake them. Therefore ſayes Chriſt, *Matth.* 13. 11, 13. *I ſpake to them in parables.* Thus ſayes the Lord to his Word and meſſengers; Go and ſpeak to ſuch a people concerning their peace; but I will caſt ſuch a vaile upon plain truths, that they ſhall not underſtand what is plainly ſpoken to them for their good, compare *Iſa.* 6. 9. with *Iſa.* 29. 10. and tell me whether God does not take up ſuch reſolutions as this, That the people, who would not ſee at one time, ſhall not ſee at another. And how

far are such a people from night, judge you?

Thirdly, He sometimes hardens their hearts, and makes them heavy by that word which in it self is a word of healing and softning. He hath said, *the word shall not go forth in vain and return empty.* It shall do something, either as a savour of life or of death; but because they have refused the word, as it offers life, God in just judgement makes it a killing word to them: as we may see *Isa.* 6. 10 it is a sad thing when the Lord shoots the Gospel as poysoned arrows against the soul, which will surely kill; yet this the Lord often does against such as have rejected the saving offers of it; as we may see, *Isa.* 28. 12, 13. *The Lord gave them line upon line, and precept upon precept, that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken &c.* But the Lord never deals thus with a people, but for sins against his word, that he might by his word punish their disobedience to it.

Fourthly, he delivers them up to their own carnal loose hearts to commit sin with greediness, *Rom* 1. 28. *As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, &c.* When the heart is once grown hard and fat, that convictions and reproofs come not at it, or when it is past feeling, as they were who are mentioned, *Eph.* 4. 19. the next thing is a giving up of themselves to all wickedness

Whe

When *God* gives men over to their lusts, men will quickly give themselves over to them. You have a very full place, which shews that God does thus give up some men. Secondly, Why he does it; and Thirdly, what the effect of this is. *Psal.* 81. 11, 12. It is said, that *God gave them up to their own lusts.* Secondly, The reason of this is, Because *they would not hearken to, and embrace the Lord and his counsel.* And thirdly, The effect of this was, *they walked in their own Counsells.* The rains were no sooner laid on their necks, but they ran away from God.

Fifthly, God goes so far with some, that he will not punish them for sin here; he will not lose one stroak more upon them, he will not afford them those outward means of humbling which he affords to many others. As he sayes of *Israel. Hos.* 4. 13, 14. *Your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery; I will not punish your daughters, when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery.* Oh it is a sad judgement, and a dreadful, when God sayes of such a soul, I will not visit him here for sinne, let him be unclean still, let him be a vile wretch still; a drunkard, a lyar, a blasphemer, a Sabbath-breaker still, I will seem to take no notice of it, I will not reckon with him till I have him in Hell, and then I will reckon with him for

all together. *Act.* 14. 16. *Act.* 17. 30. Let him go on, and prosper, and flourish in his body, and estate, he shall not be crost as other men are, that he may bless himself and fall: It is one of the saddest and sharpest of the judgements of God that can befal a poor creature, not to feel the smart of sin here. To lye under this judgement, that he shall find the sweet of sin onely. Oh let me tell you, it is a great and manifest token of Gods displeasure, and that he is implacable, when he suffers thee to go on quietly in a way of sinne, and neither smites thee by his word, nor yet by his providences, but lets all things go to thy mind, and thee go after thy lusts.

Sixthly, God gives them up to strong delusions, so that they who would not believe the word and conscience when they spake truth to them, shall afterwards believe every delusion of Satan, every forgery of their own corrupt hearts, and every deceit of sin. See that of *Isa.* 66. 4. *I will choose their delusions, saith the Lord, because when I called they did not answer, but chose the thing in which I delighted not* This is a dreadful place for such as will not hearken to, and obey the truth, when they are convinced of it; see another to confirm this, 2 *Thess.* 2. 10, 11. *Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, for this cause*

cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould believe a lie, that they might be damned, &c. Oh ſuch a word ſhould make men, upon whoſe conſciences God is ſtirring, afraid to dally with it. May not the Lord ſay to ſuch, If you will not liſten to the truth to day, you ſhall liſten to a lie to morrow? I will give Satan leave to tempt, and I will give thee up to believe whatever he ſhall propoſe; Becauſe thou wouldeſt not believe me for thy good, thou ſhalt believe him for thy hurt and ruine.

Seventhly, They may and do often fall back from moſt or all of thoſe convictions, which they had upon their ſpirits of the things of God, which I mentioned before, whilſt the Spirit ſtrove with them, as for example;

Firſt, For the knowledge which they had of the truth of God, they may believe manifeſt lyes, in oppoſition to them, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 11.

Secondly, Their Judgements may be ſo corrupted, that they may paſſe againſt thoſe things which they did approve of; they were in their Judgements for holineſs, now they may be for ſin. *Mal.* 3. 15. *They call the proud happy*; and whereas before they did approve of things which are excellent, yet now they think it a *vain thing to ſerve the Lord*; and they ſay

with those Apostates, *Mal.* 3. 14. *What profit is there in serving the Lord?*

Thirdly, Whereas he had some convictions under the word, and he made many promises to reforme, yet now he may be past feeling, as they were, *Eph.* 4. 19. His Conscience is past all tenderness and remorse, and he is *seared with a hot iron*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 2.

Fourthly he may lay aside that which he had taken up of the form of Godliness; whereas while God followed him with convictions, he used to do something that savoured of Religion, and to associate himself with those who made a profession; but now let them go by themselves, he is not to be found amongst them. *Mal.* 3. 15, 16. As soon as the Prophet had taken notice of the Apostacy of some, he adds presently; *Then they that feared the Lord spake often together*: As if he should have said, You might afterwards have found the Saints by themselves; these men were not to be found in their meetings.

Fifthly, whereas he had a sweetness in the performance of duty, he forgets that, and returns to lick up his old vomit again, and that is sweeter to him than ever Religion was; and the reason of this is, because he had pleasure in unrighteousness, 2 *Thess.* 2. 12. And although they might forget this pleasure while Conscience was heated,

and

and find some pleasure in the wayes of God, by the allaying this heat of Conscience; yet Conscience being quiet and cool again, they lose the pleasure which they apprehended in the wayes of God, and imbrace the pleasures of sin afresh.

Sixthly, Whereas they had some Convictions of the powers of the World to come, and some sad thoughts of Eternity were darted into their spirits, that they could not be quiet, the love of the present world, the profits, pleasures and honours of it eat up all these, and they forget that there is such a thing as eternity to be provided for, and they live onely as if they were to live to this present world.

Seventhly, Such men do not onely fall back from their Convictions, and seeming work of Conversion, but they go forward in wickedness, perhaps not known or practis'd by them before. This we find mentioned, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. *If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are intangled therein and overcome; the later end with them is worse then the beginning; for* &c.

Men that have gone far in a profession of Religion, and seemed to have some power upon them to reform them, yet the Corruption of their wils overcom-

ming their light and Convictions which were in their Conſciences, and finding themſelves at liberty, they are more vile than ever. They are worſt at laſt, as is not onely aſſerted here, but in that Parable, *Mat.* 12. 43. 44. 45. If the unclean Spirit be caſt out by the power of Conviction alone, he will return to his old habitation, he will come and ſee who keeps houſe, and if it be emptyiin reſpect of grace, and garniſhed onely with a profeſſion, and with natural abilites, he will enter again, and he will bring company enough to guard for the future, and they ſhall be none of the beſt, *ſeven Spirits more wicked than himſelf.* Perhaps he was a drunkard, or ſwearer, or Sabbath-breaker; But as he troubled himſelf about Religion; ſo he troubled not the profeſſors of it. But if he fall back to theſe ſins again, its ten to one but he proves a ſcoffer or a perſecutor of the ways and people of God. See an inſtance, *Mal.* 3. 14. There were ſome who pretended to holineſs, but when they fell off, *Obſ.* Firſt, they did not onely lay aſide ſuch duties. but ſtruck at them. Secondly, They ſcoffed at ſuch as walked humbly with God. Thirdly, They joyned and ſo took part with the worſt of men. They call the proud happy,

Apoſtates

Apoſtates ſeldome ſtand as Neuters.

Thus I have I hope cleered the two firſt propoſitions, you have ſeene it both day and night with the wicked. I come now to ſpeak of the *Third Propoſition; viz.* That when this day is paſt and over, the things of peace are hid from the ſoul. This is ſo eaſily deducible from the two former, that I need not ſpeak much to prove it. If a day be ſet to treat with perſons, and upon terms to conclude a peace, if they ſtand out this day, and do nothing, the Commiſſion is out of date. Thus ſays the Lord, I gave Commiſſion to my Meſſengers, to Conſcience, and to the Word to plead and ſtrive with you about an agreement, and ye would not; Now the time is over, Conſcience and the Word have no Commiſſion to treat with thee again; for I am reſolved againſt peace now.

Thus God dealt with *Jezabel*, Rev. 2. 21. I gave *Jezabel* ſpace to repent, ſays he; But ſhe repented not; I am now reſolved to take another courſe with her, *I will call her*, &c. If the day end any way, Peace muſt needs end with it. When God works as I have ſhewn you, and they come to that paſs, as hath been declared, we may eaſily concude, Peace is hid.

Firſt if God withdraw from the ſoul,

and give over ſtirring, Corruption muſt needs carry it. When God takes away thoſe Convictions which did reſtraine and bridle the man, he will doubtleſſe then follow his own luſts, and take fill of ſinne, commit it with greedineſs: But you ſee it evidently, God hath ſaid, *my ſpirit ſhall not alwayes ſtrive with man*; Such a man hath deſired to enjoy his Luſts quietly, and I am reſolved he ſhall have enough of it; and where will ſuch a man ſtop, whom God will not hinder? or when will he returne, whom God will not draw? Corruption will doubtleſſe Lord it in ſuch a ſoul.

Secondly, If the Lord leave ſtirring with the ſoul, Satan will have his will upon it. If the Lord withdraw his inward workings, Satan will draw neer, and he will fill up the Houſe; If Chriſt rule not, he will. *Paul* ſets out the Condition of poor ſouls who are without Chriſt thus; 2 *Tim.* 2. 26. *Satan leads them Captive at his will*; and *Eph.*2.2. He ſays *they walk according to the Prince of the power of the Ayre* (i.e.) according to his mind. This is the Condition of every Naturall man. Satan hath gotten ſuch a power over them, that they doe what he commands. But beſides this power which Satan hath in men naturally, here is a

Judiciary

Judiciary delivering up of ſouls to the power and will of *Satan* when their day is over. Many who are under the firſt power of Satan may be recovered, but ſuch as come thus under his power are irrecoverably loſt and undone, 2 *Cor.* 4, 3, 4. *If our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt,* τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις. Not to ſuch as are loſt in *Adam*, as all men are who are naturally in a loſt Condition, of which yet ſome at leaſt ſhall be repaired: But ſuch as are appointed to be deſtroyed, who are loſt paſt hope. In a word, when a mans day is over, he is loſt, and peace is hid from him upon a twofold account.

Firſt, In reſpect of God. He withdraws the light and reſolves never more to have to do with ſuch a poor creature in a way of mercy, never to whiſper one word of conviction, or of counſel more to him concerning his ſoul, and then he that is filthy muſt needs be filthy ſtill; who will be faithful to that mans ſoul, or ſhew him the miſery of his Condition or the folly of his wayes, whom God will counſel no more? The Sun is ſet and the day muſt needs be done.

Secondly, The day being done, peace is hid in reſpect of himſelf, becauſe he had no eyes to ſee the things of peace; They were but ſhut before, either out of prejudice, or neglect, or wantonneſs, but now they

they are put out, or sealed up, so that they shal be opened no more; and then although the Sun shine never so bright, yet the eyes being put out, he lyes under an impossibility of seeing the things of peace. This is as clear as the Sun when it shines, from that of *John* 12. 39, 40. *Therefore they could not believe, because he had blinded their eyes, and ha dened their hearts*, &c. Thus the day of grace and peace you see may be over unto men, although the Gospel in respect of the publ que administrations do continue as clear as ever. Thus we finde it was with some of the *Jews* in *Isaiahs* time, as I have shewn you from *Isa.* 6. 9, 10. Yet was he the most Evangelical of all the Prophets. And thus it was in Christ's time; many who lived under the richest dispensations of the Gospel (who heard and saw Christ, who spake as never man spake, and did what never any did) yet were past seeing, and Christ saies expresly at last, *That he did not intend that they should see*, Matth. 13. 10, 11, 12.

Before I come to ap ly these truths which have been proved, I shall clear them from some mistakes or misapprehensions which might arise.

First, Some will say, Does not that which hath been spoken strongly infer that Christ died for all?

Answ.

Answ. The Gospel hath plainly and fully declared that Christ died for sinners, and all sinners without exception are invited to come to him, and take *freely of the waters of life*, and the promise of Acceptance is clear. None shall be refused who will come to him. So that upon this account we have as much liberty in preaching the Gospel, and can give as much encouragement to sinners, as if we did preach universal Redemption; for then men could have no surer footing for faith than the word and promise of God, who cannot lie, and this word they have now; *He that believeth shall be saved.*

Secondly, Who can say that Christ died not for him in particular? thou hast no Negative; But the Lord hath left thee a foundation for hope, yea and for strong Confidence, if thou doest not turn thy back upon Christ. That he died for sinners, is clear, that thou art one is as plain; and if thou approvest of the terms of the Gospel, if thou desirest to partake of the benefit of his death upon the terms of Believing and Repenting, thou maiest undoubtedly have it. If thou wilt come, God keeps open house, and thou maist assure thy self of thy welcome. So that as to thy encouragement to come in to Christ, it matters not whether he

died

died for many, or for all; or whether for thee in particular or not; for without all diſpute he came that all they that believe might be ſaved: And they who ſay that Chriſt died for all, acknowledge that his death ſaves none but upon theſe terms. If thou haſt a will to Believe and Repent, thy encouragement is as good as any can be given thee: But if thou haſt no will to theſe things, it is no matter whether he dyed for thee or not, for thou ſhalt be damned without all controverſie. *He that believeth not ſhall be damned*; ſo ſay we, and ſo ſay they who believe that Chriſt died for thee in particular.

Secondly, But does not this which hath been ſaid ſuppoſe that man hath a free will, and power to believe and repent, and convert himſelf? Becauſe you ſay he may be ſaved, if he will come up to the terms propoſed.

Anſw. No. This doctrine which hath been delivered, hath no ſuch foundation. But I ſhall lay down as ſafely and as cautiouſly, yet as plainly as I can, what we are to conceive of the abilities and will of man in this point.

Firſt, It ſuppoſeth that men who periſh do not do what they can; they do not exerciſe and improve that power which they have. I ſuppoſe the difference betwixt natural

tural and ſpiritual abilities is diſcovered in the Parable of the Talents; he that had the ſingle Talent hid it, when they who had double Talents improved them. *Mat.* 25. 20, 24. Although we may by following Scripture expreſſions ſafely ſay, that the natural mans Abilities fall ſhort in ſpiritual performances, yet we cannot ſay, he hath no power at all in theſe things. He may do more good than he does, and he may do that which he doth better, although he can do nothing well. It is very hard to ſay how far he can go, although we can ſhew how far he cannot go. The abilities of nature muſt be left like a *Terra incognita* which hath not been travailed over; Becauſe never any natural man did go ſo far as he was able to go for God.

Secondly, It ſuppoſes that no man did ever periſh who did his utmoſt to lay hold upon ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt. He who hath given ſuch encouragement, as to ſay that *he would not break the bruiſed reed, nor quench the ſmoaking flax*, will not refuſe any who have laboured with all their might and ſtrength to come to God by him. He that ſayes, *he will in no wiſe caſt out them that come*, doubtleſs will not caſt off thoſe who take ſuch pains to come. He that hath ſaid to ſinners, *James* 4. 5. *Draw neer to me, and I will draw neer to you*, will alſo make it

good

good, and meet those more than half way, as he did the prodigal Sonne, who desire to return to him. We have a notable Scripture for this, *Jer.* 30. 21. *He shall approach unto me; for who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me?* As if the Lord had said; Do you not see how such a one tuggs and labours with his heart to draw it God-ward, and yet complains that when he had done what he can, all will not do; his heart is full of backsliding. I will not suffer such a poor soul to stand off; I will cause him to approach. God hath made an absolute promise to those who labour for Heaven, and take pains as it were for life, *Hosea* 6. 3. *Then shall ye know if ye follow on to know the Lord*, &c. And the Lord sayes elsewhere: *Then shall ye finde me, if you seek me with all your hearts.*

Object. But you will say; is it not said *Luk.* 13. 24. *Many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able.*

Answ. It is said, *many shall seek*, not *strive*, (*i. e.*) they would enter if it could be with ease. The souldier who dare not or will not venture his life in a storme, would seek for a way to enter without labour or hazard.

Secondly, Many may *strive* (as well as *seek*) but not to the uttermost; and they have

have no reaſon to charge God with the loſs of their ſouls, when they have not put out their abilities to the utmoſt.

Thirdly, Many ſtrive much, but not in Gods way, as the Scribes and Phariſees did, and as the Papiſts and many Legal perſons do, who do not ſtrive in Chriſt and for Chriſt. But there was never any that did his utmoſt for life in the Goſpel-way, that did miſs of it.

The Lord did never give any poor ſoul occaſion to ſay; Lord, thou haſt propouuded ſuch a way for poor ſinners to come to life and ſalvation, and thou haſt commanded us thus to ſeek it, and behold I would, but thou wouldeſt not; I have done my utmoſt on my part, but thou haſt failed on thy part.

Thirdly, It ſuppoſes that no man did periſh for want of power, which had a will to Believe and repent. When ever the will of a poor Creature did come over to God, there did alwayes come with it a ſufficiency of grace to lead him through all the works of grace. Although there were not abilities ſuitable to the will, yet they were ſome way ſuited to the work of Converſion. Not that I do think with ſome, That the will of man moves firſt in the improvement of his abilities, and that the Lord

then

then ſteps in with more grace and ſtrength as a reward of this. But I believe that God does by his ſpecial grace move the will, and ſets that (with what he hath given already) to work, and where he doth by his free grace excite what he hath already given, he doth aſſiſt that with more. God is firſt in the work of Converſion, and his grace moves the will; *Pſal.* 110. 3. *In the day of thy power thy people ſhall be willing.* And when God doth begin in the will to move that toward Chriſt, he will not ſuffer the work to fail for want of power to carry it on. God never ſtarves his own work. *Phil.* 2. 13. *He worketh in you to will and to do*: There is a neceſſary connexion betwixt the will and the deed. If the Lord (in his free grace) give the will, he will enable to do, if not what we ſhould, or would, yet what he will accept of.

Fourthly, it ſuppoſeth thus much, that it matters not whether thou haſt ſuch a power to believe and Repent, which ſome plead for. For if thou haſt a will to believe and repent, thou ſhalt not miſcarry for want of power. Follow thy will, and thou mayeſt expect power confidently from the Lord. But if thou haſt no will toward theſe things, and art reſolved not to make uſe of what thou haſt, it is no matter whether thou haſt more or leſs. If thou haſt no power of thy

ſelf,

ſelf, yet if thou haſt a Will, the Lord vvill not let thee ſtand out for vvant of povver. And if thou hadſt all this povver in thy hand, and haſt no vvill to employ and improve it for thy ſoul, it is all one as to thy ſalvation. Thou ſhalt periſh.

Fifthly, It ſuppoſes that the Lord doth not condemn men for vvhat they cannot do (although they cannot do vvhat he commands) but becauſe they vvill not. God commands thee to believe, to repent, to be humbled for thy ſins, and to make thee a nevv heart, to forſake thy very evil thoughts. Thou canſt no more do theſe things, then the Blackamore can change his skin, or the Leopard his ſpots, *Jer.* 13. 23. But this is not that vvhich vvill damn thee, that thou canſt not do them, but this vvill be thy condemnation, that thou vvouldſt not do them. It is true; if thou vvert ſenſible of thine inability, thou mighteſt plead a cannot novv, and make good uſe of it thus, Lord thou haſt commanded *that I ſhould keep thy righteous judgements.* But I cannot. *Oh that my vvayes were ſo directed,* &c. Thou haſt commanded me *to make me a new heart,* *Exek.* 18. 31. But I cannot. Therefore *Pſal.* 51. 10. *Create in me a new heart, and renew a right ſpirit within me.*

Thou haſt commanded me to believe, but Lord I cannot, I find abundance of baſe

baſe unbelief within me, *Mar.* 9. 14. therefore *Lord, help my unbelief.* Thou haſt commanded me to waſh and make me clean, but I cannot; I can as ſoon waſh off the ſpots from the Leopard; *Ezek.* 36.25. Therefore *ſprinkle clean water upon me, and I ſhall be clean; waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than ſnow, Pſalm* 51. 8. Thou haſt commanded me to love *thee with all my heart, and with all my ſtrength*; But I cannot; I finde much of the love of the world creeps into my heart, and intercepts my affections, and I am full of Backſlidings. *Jerem.* 32. 40. Therefore *Lord put thy Law in my heart, that I may not depart from thee*; in a word, Thou haſt commanded *me to ceaſe from evil, and to do good.* But I cannot, *for I find* (Rom. 7. 23.) *a Law in my members rebelling*, &c. Therefore Lord deliver me from the ſin of this body, or from this body of ſinne. This is the uſe thou ſhouldeſt make of thy Cannot, and thus improved and pleaded out with God in time, it might be of ſingular advantage to thee. But it will be vain to think to lay up this plea by thee until the laſt day, and to think to ſtop Judgement by it then. For the Lord will proceed with thee upon other termes, and ſo will fruſtrate ſuch a plea as this is; For he will not condemn thee, becauſe thou couldeſt not,

but

but becauſe thou wouldſt not believe. And when thou art found guilty of ſtubborn and wilful diſobedience, it will be in vain to plead inability. Thy weakneſs was the reaſon why thou couldeſt not believe, but it was not the reaſon why thou wouldeſt not believe. If ever thou wouldſt have pleaded inſufficiency, thou ſhouldeſt have done it whilſt there was time for it, when it might have been removed. The buſineſs then to be proved will be that thou wouldeſt not believe, and for this thou ſhalt be condemned. *John* 3. 19. *This is condemnation that light is come into the world, and men love darkneſs more than light.*

Sixthly, It ſuppoſes that a mans Cannot is from his will not. Therefore he cannot becauſe he will not. There is a twofold Cannot in unbelievers. A firſt and a ſecond. The firſt is while the day of grace does continue, of which I am now to ſpeak, and this from his corrupt will. While God is offering to him termes of peace and reconciliation, he is wilfull and ſhuts his eyes, and ears, and will not ſee nor hear what is for his good.

There is a ſecond Cannot which follows this, a Judiciary Cannot. When man hath ſhut his eyes, and therefore could not ſee the things of his peace,

the

the Lord ſeals them up, and ſayes, From henceforth thou ſhalt not ſee any thing for thy good; this is a dreadful cannot, and and vvhen men come to this, they are almoſt in hell. But I am to ſpeak of the former of theſe, (vvhich is ſo much the more fearful, becauſe it leads to this) the cannot vvhich ariſes from a mans ovvn vvill: the vvill and affections blind the Underſtanding, and therefore he cannot ſee; The corruption of man doth moſt of all appear in his vvill, for this is the very ſeat of it, from vvhence it iſſueth forth into every part of him, and defileth the vvhole man; the vvill is the Ringleader in good or evil. And that is not miſled by the underſtanding, until the underſtanding hath been ſeduced by that. A man is firſt prejudiced againſt ſpiritual things, he vvills them not, and therefore he ſees not the excellency that is in them. Thus the vvill blinds the underſtanding, and that leads the vvill aſide, and ſo the blind lead the blind till they both fall into the ditch. Thus vve ſee daily by ſad experience, hovv mens paſſions or intereſts do blind them, that they do not ſee things as they are. Men love or hate things, and then they judge them to be good or evil according to their affections.

The Natural man hates the vvayes of Godlineſs, and then fancies them to be hard

ard

and unpleaſant; he judges them fooliſhneſs, becauſe they croſs his luſts, vvhich have gotten his affections, and therefore he cannot receive them. Again, he loves his luſts, and therefore he fancies that they are comely and pleaſant, he is not vvilling to ſee the deformity of ſin. Like ſome fond mother vvho doats ſo much upon her child, that ſhe vvill hear no evil of it; ſhe is ſo blinded by affection that ſhe cannot ſee faults. Thus it vvas vvith *Balaam*, vvho (although he had aſſurance that *Iſrael* ſhould be bleſt and not curſt) vvould fain perſvvade himſelf (through the extream love of the vvages of iniquity) that he might curſe *Iſrael* from ſuch or ſuch a place. So alſo is it vvith men, although the word of God flie in their faces for ſin, and tells them that if they let it not go, their ſouls ſhall go for it; yet the love of ſin and their extream unwillingneſs to part with it, puts them upon ſtudying ſome excuſe or other for it, and they would fain perſwade themſelves that there cannot be ſo much danger as is pretended in keeping this or that ſin. So that the reaſon why they ſee not the evil and danger of ſin, is becauſe they are not willing to ſee. They are not willing to ſee what ſurfetting and drunkenneſs will coſt them, that they ſhall have hunger and thirſt for them in Hell. They do not willingly ſee *what the luſt*

of the eyes, the Luſt of the fleſh, and the pride of life will coſt them, that thoſe flames of Luſt ſhall be turned into flames of fire.

They are loth to ſee what covetouſueſs, pride, or oppreſſion, *&c.* will come to, and therefore they conſider not the danger and nakedneſs of their poor Souls. And who is ſo blind as he that will not ſee? Surely ſuch a blindneſs cannot be pleaded before the Lord. When a man is corrupted in his affectionsit is hard toſet his judgement right: For ſuch a man will nothing that might weaken his former opinion. Thou loveſt thy corruptions, thy boſome luſts; the Word bids thee cut it off, if it were a Right Hand, and pluck it out if it were a Right Eye; nay it bids thee do it without delay. The Devil perſwades thee that thou needeſt not be ſo ſtrict, thou maieſt ſpare one Luſt, the Lord will pardon thee in this one thing, or if thou muſt caſt it away, it is time enough, yet hereafter will ſerve the turn. Now although the Scripture be plain; and reaſon tells thee, that if it were poſſible for thee to be ſaved, and yet to keep one Luſt, or that another time might ſerve turn to part with it, yet it were the ſafeſt way to part with every Luſt, yea and that preſently alſo; yet the Love that thou beareſt to thy Luſt does blinde thee, ſo that thou wilt ſee or hear nothing to the prejudice of it. Thou art like the

the deaf Adder *that ſtops his ear, and refuſes to hear, Charm the Charmer never ſo wiſely.* Pſal. 58. 5. Some ſay of the Adder that ſhe is deaf on one Ear, and ſtops the other to prevent charming: others ſay that ſhe lays one Ear cloſe to the earth, and ſtops the other with her Tayl.

It is true thou canſt not heare. But what is the Reaſon of it? is it not becauſe thou haſt ſtopped thine ear; and thou canſt not ſee; but is it not becauſe thou vvilt not? thou haſt ſhut thine eyes, But vvill this be a good plea?

It is obſervable that tvvo Evangeliſts quoting that paſſage in *Iſaiah* Chap. 6. 9. The one ſays, *Joh.* 12. 40. *They could not becauſe he had blinded their eyes*, &c. But another gives the reaſon of it from their unvvillingneſs to imbrace the truth *Math.* 13. 14, 15. *For their eyes they have cloſed*, &c. So that laying both together, It is plain, that ſometimes men cannot becauſe they will not: ſometimes again they cannot, becauſe God ſays they ſhall not. But the ſecond is a puniſhment for the firſt.

Thus farre I have ſhevvn you vvhat kind of Natural abilities this doctrine ſuppoſeth in the Creature. I ſhall adde a fevv things to ſhevv you vvhat kind of freedome it ſuppoſeth in the vvill.

It ſuppoſeth that the Lord leaves the Will

free, I mean the vvill of the Naturall man (*i e.*) he does not determine or incline them to Evill, but leaves them to their ovvn choice, vvhether it be of good or evil, of life or death, light or darkneſs. If he ſhould move them to Evil, that could not be true of the Apoſtle, *James* 1. 13. *God tempteth no man to evil.* Therefore the Lord tels *Iſrael* that he had ſet life and death before them, that they might chooſe one. And the reaſon vvhy men do not chooſe life vvhen it is ſet before them rather than death, is not becauſe the vvill is not free, but becauſe it is corrupted and depraved; For vvithout controverſie the Will is ſo far free, that vvhat ever a man Wills or chooſes, he does it freely, the vvill cannot be forc'd. But let me not be miſtaken here, as If I vvere pleading for that vvhich ſome do make to be the liberty of the Will. They vvould have the Will of man to be free from corruption, and void of Enmity to God and his vvays, and to ſtand indifferent betvvixt good and evil. Now I do not ſay that the Will of man is not corrupted; but I ſay that the Will hath an Eſſential Freedome; and this may very well be: for it may be more prone to Evil than to good through corruption, and yet looſe none of its Eſſential Liberty.

Conſider therefore the Freedome of the Will does not conſiſt in an indifferency to good

good or evil, as some would have it, who place the Will of man Naturally betwixt these two without any inclination to one more than to another. And indeed, they who lay the whole weight of Salvation upon the Will of the Creature, must prove this, or they prove nothing: For if mans Salvation does depend wholly upon his Will, as to the perfecting of it, and that will be byassed by Natural Corruption, there is great and eminent danger of such a mans miscarrying. But although the Will be left free, and not determined to Evil by the Lord, yet I shall shew you that there is no such freedom of Will as many men dream of, *viz.* Never any man did stand equally poysed betwixt good and evil.

First, Dem. *Adam* in the state of Innocency had freedom of Will, if ever any had it, yet he did not stand thus at an indifferency betwixt good or evil. But with the liberty of his Will he had a holy inclination to good. He had a holy disposition to good, yet withal a power to choose the contrary. And this inclination to good was of the perfect freedom of his Will. But if the freedom of the Will did consist in an indifferency to good or evil, then it must follow, Either that *Adam* had not a free Will, or that *Adam* had not the Image of God. For such an indifferency to good or evil, could not consist

With the image of God. For wherein was he like to God, if not in his Will? And if that were inclined no more to good than evil, wherein was he like to God? ſurely he ſtood inclinable to good, although not unchangeably; ſo that although there was a holy diſpoſition in *Adams* heart to good, yet this did not take away the freedom of it; he willed good the more freely; and for evil he had liberty to chooſe it, as he did being tempted.

Secondly, Man in his fallen eſtate hath not ſuch a kind of freedom of will as conſiſteth in the indifferency of it to good or evil. For beſides the liberty of his will, there is corruption in it, inclining and byaſſing it to evil, which yet he freely wills. And that there is ſuch corruption in the will of man, is plain, in that the Scripture excuſes no part, and principally it charges corruption upon the Will. Nay to ſhew how much the Will is inclinable to Evil, he calls the Luſts of men the Wills of the fleſh and of the minde, *Eph.* 2. 2. intimating that ſuch abominations as they have lived in, had their riſe principally from the corruption of the Will, which did lead to ſuch things. Hence I ſuppoſe it is that evil things are called our own things, and the wayes of ſin our own wayes, *Act.* 14. 16. *He ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own wayes,* (i. e.)

in

in wayes of ſin and vanity. Hence alſo the Luſts and looſe practices of the Gentiles are called the *Will of the Gentiles*. 1 *Pet.* 4. 3. To ſhew that their very hearts and affections were in ſuch wayes and works, and that what they did was not ſo much from any thing without, as from the ſtrong and ſteady bent of their own Wills. Nay the Apoſtle to ſhew more fully the corruption of the Will, makes but one will betwixt carnal men and the devil, *Epheſ.* 2. Compare the ſecond verſe with the third. He ſayes in one, *they walked according to the courſe or inclination of the world*, and in the other he ſayes *they walked according to the Prince of the powers of the Ayre*; They fulfilled the Will of the devil and their own at once; And indeed natural men do incline to evil as he does, onely their wills are changeable, and may bow towards God, but his is unchangeably fixed on evil: ſo that by this it appears the natural man hath no ſuch freedom or liberty of Will as was mentioned. God hath left it free, but his own corruption hath not left it indifferent to good or evil, but ſtrongly inclines it to the latter: And if the natural man ſtood in ſuch an indifferency to good or evil, it is very ſtrange that the holy Ghoſt ſhould ſpeak ſo of the whole lump of Mankinde, *Romans* 3.

10,11,12. *There is none that seeketh after God, there is none that doth Good, no not one.* It is strange that none should choose the right way, if they stood all indifferent.

Thirdly, We see the renewed man stands not in such an indifferency; For grace which does not destroy the liberty of the will, inclines it to Good. We find that the will renewed is the very seat of Grace and holiness, *Rom.* 7. 18. *To will is present.* And the same Apostle says, *With my mind I serve the law of God.* Surely by his mind he properly means his will: that was strongly moved towards God, and he could see grace there, although he could see it no where else, *ver.* 18. *In my body dwels no good thing*, Saints see grace in their wills, which doth support them against the corruption which they see in every part beside. And by the Rule of Contraries, if grace be most in the Regenerate will, Corruption is most in the Unregenerate will; but this the Natural man will not take notice of. So that its manifest that although man in Innocency, in his fallen, and in his renewed state, had liberty in their wills, yet none of them had that liberty which consisted in an indifferency to good or evil.

First, For *Adam* in innocency had liberty to choose good or evil, but he was disposed and inclined to good. *Eccles.* 7. 29.

7. 29. *God made man upright.*

Secondly, Man fallen chooſes evil rather than good, *Gen.* 6. 5. *The thoughts of his heart are evil, onely evil, and that continually.*

Thirdly, Man in his renewed ſtate, although he hath a corrupt part in him, yet he is more inclinable to good than evil. His will is principally for God. So that theſe things conſidered, we may conclude that a Mans Cannot is from his Corruption. And if *Paul* complained of a Cannot, *Rom.* 7. 18. when yet his will was not indifferent but manifeſtly inclining to good; ſurely we do Nature and the Natural man no wrong to ſay of him, that he cannot, becauſe of his Corruption which does ſtrongly diſpoſe his Will to evil, It is ſtra[illegible] that Saints complain of a Cannot, who have grace in their Wills, and yet many will not allow ſuch a Cannot in the Natural man, who hath nothing but Corruption in his Will.

Having now ſhewn you theſe things, there lies another ſcruple to be anſwered, which is this; Does God go ſo far as hath been hinted, to make a day of Grace for them that periſh, and have they all outward helps in common with them who are ſaved, and have they ſo many inward helps as have been mentioned.

Qu. Wherein does the work of God

upon his Elect differ from his workings upon theſe whilſt their day continues.

Anſ. The difference lies principally in this; That all the movings and workings of God upon wicked men, are not upon their Wills to bring them over to himſelf; but they are upon their underſtandings, their Conſciences, and ſometimes upon ſome of their affections. But the principal work of God upon his Elect is upon their Wills, they come over firſt and faſteſt unto God.

The Lord goes thus far with thoſe whom he converts not; Well, ſayes he, I will prove you by illumination, I will ſhew you many of the truths of the Goſpel, and you ſhall ſee what belongs to your peace, ſo farre that thy judgement ſhall be for Heaven. Nay I will ſhake the conſcience alſo, and that ſhall riſe againſt thee by way of conviction, thou ſhalt ſee the danger of thy eſtate in this condition, and I will break in upon thy affections; thou ſhalt find, not onely fears of hell and wrath to ſollicite thy return, but alſo ſome joyes in complying with my word and wayes. But as for thy will, I will leave that to its freedom, let it chooſe what pleaſeth it beſt; now let it take life or death, they are both before it. And now if the will were indifferent, when Judgement and conſcience, and

ſome

ſome of its affections are for Believing and repenting, it would ſurely ſtrike in, and all theſe would engage and bring it over to Chriſt. But notwithſtanding all this, the Will falls back, and chooſeth vanity and ſin, which pleaſes it beſt, becauſe of the corruption which is in it. So that while corruption remains in the Will, it ſpues out this knowledge and theſe convictions, and runs on to folly; which it hath choſen. *Rom.* 1. 28. *They did not like to retain the knowledge of God in their hearts.* Whatever comes in to check the ſoul in the way of ſin, is an unwelcome gueſt, ſo long as the will remains corrupted and tainted, and the will caſteth but the light of the underſtanding, and the convictions of conſcience, as the marriners do pump out the water which breaks in upon them. *Balaam* had a clear knowledge of the happineſs of the Saints, but his Will was for Covetouſneſs.

Felix had a cleer conviction of *judgement to come*, but his will was for his corruption, and therefore he reſolves to ſtop the mouth of Conſcience by ſending *Paul* away. The will deals with the light of truth as the ſore eye deals with the ſunne, ſhuts the window to keep it out, becauſe it offends. *John* 3. 17. *Men*

upon his Elect differ from his workings upon these whilst their day continues.

Anſ. The difference lies principally in this; That all the movings and workings of God upon wicked men, are not upon their Wills to bring them over to himself; but they are upon their underſtandings, their Conſciences, and ſometimes upon ſome of their affections. But the principal work of God upon his Elect is upon their Wills, they come over firſt and faſteſt unto God.

The Lord goes thus far with thoſe whom he converts not; Well, ſayes he, I will prove you by illumination, I will ſhew you many of the truths of the Goſpel, and you ſhall ſee what belongs to your peace, ſo farre that thy judgement ſhall be for Heaven. Nay I will ſhake the conſcience alſo, and that ſhall riſe againſt thee by way of conviction, thou ſhalt ſee the danger of thy eſtate in this condition, and I will break in upon thy affections; thou ſhalt find, not onely fears of hell and wrath to ſollicite thy return, but alſo ſome joyes in complying with my word and wayes. But as for thy will, I will leave that to its freedom, let it chooſe what pleaſeth it beſt; now let it take life or death, they are both before it. And now if the will were indifferent, when Judgement and conſcience, and

ſome

ſome of its affections are for Believing and repenting, it would ſurely ſtrike in, and all theſe would engage and bring it over to Chriſt. But notwithſtanding all this, the Will falls back, and chooſeth vanity and ſin, which pleaſes it beſt, becauſe of the corruption which is in it. So that while corruption remains in the Will, it ſpues out this knowledge and theſe convictions, and runs on to folly; which it hath choſen. *Rom.* 1. 28. *They did not like to retain the knowledge of God in their hearts.* Whatever comes in to check the ſoul in the way of ſin, is an unwelcome gueſt, ſo long as the will remains corrupted and tainted, and the will caſteth but the light of the underſtanding, and the convictions of conſcience, as the marriners do pump out the water which breaks in upon them. *Balaam* had a clear knowledge of the happineſs of the Saints, but his Will was for Covetouſneſs.

Felix had a cleer conviction of *judgement to come*, but his will was for his corruption, and therefore he reſolves to ſtop the mouth of Conſcience by ſending *Paul* away. The will deals with the light of truth as the ſore eye deals with the ſunne, ſhuts the window to keep it out, becauſe it offends. *John* 3. 17. *Men*

love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil. They are ſet to do wickedly, and they reſolve to do it quietly.

But when God works upon his elect, he begins with their wills, he ſets them at work, and when this begins, the whole man ſoon follows. For the will commands all, it bids one go, and it goes, and another come and it comes; and though the Lord does thus work upon the will, yet he takes not away the liberty of it. But what the ſoul wills it wills freely, and his principal diſtinguiſhing works lyes in theſe three things.

Firſt, he takes off the prejudice that was in the will, and that averſeneſs which was in it to ſpiritual things. Before, corruption did lead it againſt light and convictions, now it is otherwiſe. This was the firſt work upon *Paul*, Act. 9. 4, 5. Chriſt took off the prejudice he had againſt the wayes and people of Chriſt; *why perſecuteſt thou me*, ſayes Chriſt, theſe are my wayes and my people. Then *Paul* cryes out, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?*

Secondly, The prejudice of the Will being removed there is an eaſier and fairer way opened to ſpiritual things, the ſoul ſees excellency now, where it ſaw none before; and ſo the underſtanding gets more light, and is the better able to guide the will. How did *Paul* ſee the truth and Harmony of

Scri-

Scripture to prove Christ to be the Sonne of God when his prejudice against him was removed. *Act.* 9. 22.

Thirdly, He does not only remove prejudice and gives it more light, but he does also sweetly draw the will by a perswasive power: So that although it comes necessarily, yet it is freely. Therefore sayes *David*, who had experienc'd this work of grace upon himself. *Psal.* 110. 3. *In the day of thy power thy people shall be willing.* When God does manifest the power of grace, it is mostly to be seen in the wills of his people. You have a manifest proof of this, *Jer.* 31. 18, 19. *After I was turned I repented.* And what was that turning, but such a power as I have shewn you moving the will. And he acknowledges his repentance to be a fruit of his turning to God, or rather of Gods turning him. What is it that *David* prayes for, is it no more than illumination or conviction, *Psal.* 119. 36. *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies.* And what does the Spouse pray for but this? *Cant.* 1. 4. *Draw me and we will run after thee.* Does she pray onely for a moral drawing? Surely no. She was convinc'd of the excellency of Christ, and of following of him before, as is plain by the second and third verses. But she prayes for more effectual grace in her will, and indeed here lies the main of the work

of

of grace. For ſhould God let in never ſo much light and plain convictions, and yet ſuſpend his influence from the will, that would hang behind, and the ſoul would be left out of Heaven. It would be ſad with Gods people if things ſhould be left depending upon their wills, and their wills left to themſelves. And if there were no more but a Salvability or poſſibility for all men to be ſaved, and this did hang upon their wills embracing or not embracing the Truth, according to their liberty; then, although ſome would ſay, here is hopes that every man might be ſaved, yet there were a ſtronger probability, that no man might be ſaved. For this muſt be granted,

Firſt, that as all have liberty to chooſe, ſo they have liberty to refuſe, and ſo may all be loſt.

Secondly, They are all corrupted, and very likely they may be byaſſed by that, and led aſide from the truth.

Thirdly. They are tempted, and it is ten to one but this may turn the ſcale, if the Will ſtand indifferent; it is a ſtrong probability that corruption and temptation together will weigh down the ſcale.

Fourthly, Satan prevailed over *Adam* when he had more grace than we, and none of thoſe corruptions which we have;

have; therefore he may prevail over every particular man, if he ſtand upon his termes.

Fifthly, He often prevails over the people of God againſt their wills, which are inclined to good, and by grace diſpoſed for it; How much more may he prevail over thoſe whoſe wills at beſt are but indifferent, but as hath been proved are corrupted.

But ſome will ſay yet farther; if there be ſuch a difference betwixt the work of God upon the elect and others, and God does afford that to one which he does not to another: *Qu.* How ſhall all men be left without excuſe? ſhall not thoſe that periſh have ſomewhat to ſay for themſelves, in as much as the Lord did not work upon them as he did upon others?

Anſw, No. Becauſe firſt he leaves them the caſting voice; he goes ſo far with them until it comes to this, whether they will believe and repent or not; it lies now upon the motion of their wills. If thy Will did move Heavenward, thou ſhouldeſt be ſaved; if it move otherwayes, thou art loſt. The main thing which ſtands betwixt thee and Heaven is thy corrupt will.

Secondly, Thou haſt as much from God to move thee to look Heavenward, as thou haſt from Satan to lead thee on in ſinne. For thou haſt light, and Convictions,

victions, and many moral perſwaſions from the Lord, and thou haſt no more from Satan; He cannot force thee, he can but perſwade; and thus the Lord deals with thee many wayes. Nay, thou ſeeſt oftentimes more reaſon to come off from the world, and thy Luſts, and to follow Chriſt, than thou doeſt to continue in them, and yet thou goeſt againſt theſe perſwaſions.

Thirdly, Thou doeſt follow thy light in all things, except the things of thy ſoul, thy will follows thy underſtanding in all carnal things, in profit, honour, and advantage, but it goes contrary to it in the things of thy ſoul.

Fourthly, thou canſt not plead thine inability, becauſe thou thinkeſt that thou haſt ability, Thou thinkeſt thou canſt believe and repent at pleaſure, yet thou doeſt not ſet about it, therefore thou art inexcuſable. As theſe *Jews* were, *John* 9. 41. *Becauſe you ſay you ſee your ſin remains.*

Fifthly, Thou abuſeſt ſo much power as proves that hadſt thou more thou wouldeſt abuſe that alſo. He that will not uſe that which he hath would not uſe more if he had it. Therefore they not having enough cannot excuſe thee, *Luke* 16. 10. *He that is unjuſt in little is unjuſt in much.* Therefore may it be ſaid of thee as it was of them, *Luke* 16. 31. *Neither would they repent if*

one

one roſe from the dead. So may I ſay; if thy Will be againſt Repenting and Believing, if Angels ſhould come from Heaven, and the damned ſhould be ſent from Hell to preach to thee, thou wouldeſt not believe.

Having diſpacht theſe, I come now to the uſe of what hath been laid down.

Uſe. Is it ſo then that men have a day, Then how juſtly will God condemne ſuch Goſpel ſinners at the laſt day? God will be juſtified when he ſpeaks, and cleer when he judges, but eſpecially when he deals with ſuch as obey not the Goſpel. If that Judgement ſhall be acknowledged juſt which ſhall paſs upon the Heathen, becauſe they did not walk up to the light of Nature which was the only light they had. How much more will thy ſentence be juſt, who doth not obey a light which is farre greater than this. Thou hadſt ſo much light as to make it day to thee when it was night with them: You never heard that any mans Condition who lived not under the Goſpel, was called day, but night and darkneſs, as appears, *Matthew* 4, 16. It is ſayed the people ſate in great darkneſſe before Chriſt came and preacht to them, And *Eph.* 5. 8. They were called *darkneſs.* But if they periſh who fall in the night, woe be unto thee if thou fall in the

the day. Consider of this I beseech you, all you who live under the Gospel. What will you be able to say for your selves at the last day when Christ shall plead the cause with you. When he shall point out some of you before men and Angels, and say, Behold these are the men and women that would have none of me; nor my wayes. Time was that I offered them life and salvation, but they would not have it upon my Termes, but now they shall not have it upon any Termes. They chose their Lusts before my wayes and Statutes, and now I will choose their ruine and destruction. These poor souls shall have that charge laid against them, which is brought in against *Jezabel*, Rev. 2. 21. *I gave them space to repent, and they repented not:* And what answer can be given to this? will it not fall heavy when the Lord shall say; You cannot say that I took the first advantage against you, No, I waited long, and you had your time, you were not gathered until your iniquities were full ripe, through my patience, and your perverseness. Wherefore if all these poor wretches should joyn together to petition for one drop of mercy, it would not be granted unto them; If they should lift up their voices together, and weep bitterly as *Esau* did for the blessing, yet they should not prevail, because

they

they come too late. Such souls shall be more miserable than *Esau* was; for although he came too late, and the chief blessing was gone, yet he had a lesser instead of the greater. But these who will not have it when it is offered, shall not onely lose the blessing, but shall be curst instead of being blest. *Mat.* 25. 41. *Depart from me ye cursed.* And what can be more just than this, that they who would not receive the blessing when it was offered them, should now have a curse instead of a blessing? And what a gall will this be to their hearts to consider how much they have lost for how little, and what fools they were to neglect that blessedness, which is now lost, but did once lye at their feet. Although every condemned sinner shall be sent to hell convinc'd of the Justice of the sentence under which he lyes, yet none shall go with such shame and confusion to Hell, as those who have had such a day as hath been declared.

Use 2. If there be such a day, and thy salvation depend upon thy closing with the Gospel, and the offers of it, or thy rejecting of it. Then let not your heads be so much busied about those things, which when thou hast found out thou mayest be damned. Thou pretendest that thou art much busied about enquiring whether Christ died for all or not, and that this is a point of such con-

concernment that thou canſt not believe unleſs thou art ſatisfied about it, Alas when thou haſt gotten the greateſt ſatisfaction that may be, thou art as far from Heaven as now, and thou maieſt periſh notwithſtanding. For if thou believeſt not, if thou art not regenerated and born again, whether he died for thee, or not, thou ſhalt be damned. It were more profitable abundantly for thee to ſpend that time which hath been ſpent in this ſtudy in inquiring after the terms of the Goſpel. Study Faith and Repentance, Self-denial, and the taking up of the Croſs, Go and learn what the meaning of this is: *Unleſs a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdome of God,* I remember there were ſome who came to Chriſt with ſuch a queſtion as this, and although it were not altogether uſeleſs, yet becauſe it might have been more practical, he ſlighted it, and them that brought it unto him, *Luke* 13. 24. *Are there few* (ſay they) *that ſhall be ſaved,* Chriſt would not anſwer this, leſt he ſhould give them encouragement to multiply needleſs queſtions to him: But he adviſes them to *Enter in at the ſtreight gate.* It were better to be labouring to get in our ſelves, than to be buſie to know how few or how many ſhall go in, when it will be all one to us whether they be more or leſs, if we be excluded.

Thus

Thus again many will busie their heads more about pleading out the abilities of the Natural man in the things of God, than they do in employing and improving what they have for God. It were doubtless much better for thee to spend thy time in the improvement of thy abilities for God, and for thy Eternal good, whether they be more or less, and in praying for an increase of them, than to vindicate and maintain that to be great which thou makest little use of. For whether thy abilities be more or less, yet if they be neglected, thou shalt perish with them.

Use 3. If there be such a day, *&c.* then complain not for want of power until thou hast been sensible of, and mourned over the want of a will; for this is the first and principal want of the soul. It is true, A man in his Natural Condition does want power, yet it is not properly that he wants, but he rather wants a will; for he hath power to do more than he will, it cannot be said that want of power stops him, because he goes not to the end of that which he hath; therefore he cannot complain justly and say I cannot, unless he were come so farre as he can. When thou art gone so farre as thou canst possibly, then thou mayest complain of thy Cannot; And it may be a good plea. But whilst thou mayst go farther, do not complain of thy Cannot;

Cannot; it is thy Will-not which holds thee back. Thoſe complaints are but excuſes, and God will caſt them back upon thy teeth at leſt. Thou ſayeſt as the ſluggard did who is not minded to leave his bed, *I cannot go, there is a Lion in the way*; But how does he know what is in the way, when he lyes in his bed? ſo ſayeſt thou, I cannot, but thou doeſt not try whether thou canſt or not. Thou doeſt not attempt it, or at leaſt very careleſly. The plain Engliſh of this is thou wilt not; yet thou deceiveſt thy ſelf by complaining thus of thine inability, and wouldeſt have thy will excuſed, as if there were no fault in it.

Wicked men have gotten a trick to ſteal the complaints of Gods people, and they take them into their mouths very improperly. For although the people of God who have wills to do more than they can, may complain properly of their Cannot, yet this belongs not to thee; for thou canſt do more than thou wilt. Complaints of inability do fit the mouths of none but the people of God, becauſe it is not the want of will, but of power which ſtops them. Therefore they can ſay; Lord we would be more ſpiritual and more holy, we would do more than we do, but we cannot. God hath diſcovered unto them the corruption of their Wills in their former eſtate, and hath humble

bled them for it, and he hath ſhewed them how far they did fall ſhort of their abilities formerly, and laid them in the duſt for it, and now the ſtream of their wills is turned, and they run out infinitely after God. But for thy part thou wert never humbled for the Corruption of thy will, thou art not therefore fit to complain of a Cannot. How canſt thou without ſhame complain for want of power, when thou haſt not gone to the end of what thou haſt. Go and learn what it is to be humbled for want of a will for God, and when thou haſt mourned for want of this, then thou mayeſt next be pitied when thou complaineſt for want of power, but untill thou haſt uſed all means in thy power, and reach, thou haſt no reaſon to complain of a Cannot; but when thou haſt done this, then thou mayeſt take up this complaint; *Lord, thou haſt commanded me to do thus, and thus, but I cannot.* Behold I have uſed the means, it ſticks not at my will, for I have given all diligence, but it ſticks for want of power. Lord I would if I could.

This is intimated in that Plea which *Paul* makes, *Rom.* 7. 18. *How to perform that which is good I finde not*; As if he would ſay, I do not plead a Cannot for excuſe, for it is not an idle one. Though I cannot do what good I would, yet

yet I am not content with willing it, but I am ſeeking to do it, but I finde not to do it, though I enquire after it with all diligence. Saints do not fail of the good they would do for want of endeavours, but thou ceaſeſt from endeavours and pleadeſt a Cannot, before thou haſt uſed this. Thy plea is a miſtake, and there is a deluſion in it; it fits not thy mouth, go thy way home, and ſtudy thy will not, and mourn over that; but leave this complaint to thoſe to whom of right it doth belong.

Uſe 4. If there be ſuch a day. Then labour to improve thy abilities without truſting to them; ſtrive, as knowing that without ſtriving thou ſhalt not be ſaved, and yet look unto Chriſt as having done nothing thy ſelf. Caſt away all ſelf-confidence. Run, for he that runneth not ſhall not obtain, yet look for all from free grace, knowing *it is not he that willeth, nor he that runneth, but God that ſheweth mercy, Rom.* 9. 16. If thou doeſt periſh, it is through thy own default, becauſe thou doſt not what thou mayeſt: But if thou art ſaved, it is not for for any thing wrought by thee, but for the free mercy of God in Chriſt. This is a great *myſtery* to man, he cannot tell how to act in the way of ſalvation without relying upon what he does. If it be not (ſayes he) in my power to believe and repent, why ſhould I act?

act? And if it be in my power, why do you advise me to deny my abilities? Hence come two great miscarriages amongst men: they run into the extream on either hand. Some have such high opinions of the abilities of the Creature, and take the work of salvation to be so much in the hand of Man, that they know not how to deny themselves in their own actings and wisdome in spiritual things; they give God the honour of putting them into a possibility of being saved; But they take the honour of perfecting their salvation to themselves.

Others lay the work so upon God, that they excuse themselves from doing anything: Alas (say they) we are weak, and what can we do? If he will convert us, we shall be converted: These will not know the Doctrine of Duty. There are few that will bring the Doctrine of self-denial and duty together; That will work and yet deny their works; expect God in a way of striving, and yet not rest upon indeavour. But to these I say, Although you cannot do enough to save you, yet you may omit enough to damn you. Therefore improve your abilities, lest ye perish for neglecting them.

To you who relie upon your own abilities, I say, the denying of your own abilities will do you no harm: for esteeming of them as

as little, does not make them leſs; but going out of your ſelves to God may make them more. I ſay in a word to all, You have a day. If in this day thou doeſt not lay hold of eternal life, thou ſhalt be damned, becauſe thou wouldeſt not. But if in this time thou doeſt embrace the terms of Chriſt, and lay hold on peace, it is not becauſe thou wouldeſt, but becauſe he would. He did ſtir up thy will and abilities, and did give in freſh ſupplies, or elſe thou hadſt periſhed. Let therefore what you have heard of the abilities of the natural man provoke you to go as far as it is poſſible for ſuch a one to go; and let that which you have heard of his inability keep you humble, and teach you to cry after Chriſt in the language of that poor man, *Lord help my unbelief.* Joyn ſelf-denial to all indeavours, be active and humble, Conſcientious to uſe all that thou haſt for God and thy ſoul, and yet look upon all as being nothing, and then thou haſt learned this truth aright.

Uſe 5. If ſo. Then let all the people of God admire his diſtinguiſhing grace, who hath not onely extended his common, but his ſpecial mercy to them. He hath given others enough to leave them inexcuſable, and enough to aggravate their condemnation, but he hath given you enough to convert you. It was mercy that God gave others the

the Goſpel, and the offers of it, But what mercy is it that he hath inclined your hearts to embrace the ſame being offered? He gave them a day to ſeek, but he ſet this day apart to ſeek thee. He ſet life and death before them, and left it to them to chooſe. But the Lord himſelf choſe for thee the better part. He wrought upon their underſtandings or conſciences, but he moved upon thy will. He gave thee a will to thy power, yea and beyond it, who hadſt abilities before beyond thy will. Here lies the great differencing work of grace which thou mayeſt never forget: He wrought in thee to will and to do of his good pleaſure. So that although they, who obeyed not the Goſpel, were condemned through their own wills, yet thou wert ſaved through the good pleaſure and will of God, who made thee willing in the day of his power. Who hath made thee to differ? Is it not the Lord? oh take heed of diminiſhing the grace of God. When thou denieſt the diſtinguiſhing acts of it, you do eclipſe the Glory of it. So much as you take from the corruption of the will, ſo much you take from the eminency of grace. Let thoſe who pretend to Regeneration bleſs the Lord, not as having received grace in common with others, but as having received grace in ſpecial above others. Even

as they did, *Rev.* 5. 9. They bleſs the Lord for redeeming them out of the tongues, and out of the Nations, *&c.* That God vouchſafed more to them, than to thoſe amongſt whom they lived. Oh you may ſay, It was mercy that God offered us Heaven upon any terms; and if he had gone no further, it had been enough to convince us that he was gracious. Oh! but he hath given us what he never gave them, *viz.* hearts to believe and cloſe with his gracious tenders, or elſe we had withſtood them alſo. He gave them the Law, but he put it in our hearts; all our deſires after grace are from his ſuperabounding grace, and what we are more than others, that we are from what God did vouchſafe unto us more than unto them. It is not from the improvement of the ſame Talents and means which he had with others, nor from a compliance with that general Goſpel-grace, which was given to them and us; But it was from additional mercy, this was diſtinguiſhing mercy: 'Tis by this grace that we are what we are. So we can ſay as the Apoſtle, *Gal.* 4. 9. Although we know God, yet it is more proper to ſay *we are known of God.* Therefore let him have the honour of his own work upon your hearts, in converting and turning them to himſelf; let the work be acknowledged his from the be-

gi-

ginning to the end of it; look on him as the author and finisher of your faith. If God hath moved thy heart towards himself, and hath met thy endeavours with success, and thou art able in thy experience to say, it is good to draw nigh to God, take heed of setting up an high opinion of thine own free will, as if that had moved God, rather than God had moved it; as if what thou hast were rather the recompence of improved Abilities, than the fruits of Gods distinguishing Grace. If ever you would honour free grace, keep up in thy heart a deep sense of it's distinguishing acts.

Use 6. If it be thus, Then above all things look to your Wills, and try them, whether they be set for heaven and holiness or not; And in pursuing this, mind these three things.

First, get a thorow sense of the corruption of thy will naturally, and of its indisposition to good. For, want of the knowledge of the malignity of the Will causes deep security amongst many; they think their hearts are as good as any, when indeed the reason why they account them good, is because they did never yet study the evil of them; and many poor souls go blinded to Hell with the good opinion of their own Wills.

Secondly, Go to the Lord and intreat

him to take the work into his hand; if the business of thy Salvation be left upon the motion of thy Will, thou art lost. Tell him that thou hast found which way the Will of man does naturally bend, and if he should leave thy will to it self, thou art likely to make the same choice that others have done who have been so left. Tell him, thou hast so much experience of the corruption of thy will, that thou dareſt not trust it, nor venture thy eternal interest upon it. And whereas others dispute to get the work into their hands, do thou pray as hard to get it into the hands of God.

Thirdly, Above all things beg a Will of him. Pray earnestly that he would not onely put forth his power in Illumination and bare convictions, but that he would reveal this power in bringing over thy will to himself, plead out this above all, that he would convert thee, that thou mayest be converted, that he would incline thy Will unto his testimonies, and that he would draw thee that thou mayest run after him. And tell him often, that thou standest in need of nothing more than a will for him, and if this be not given in, thou art lost. Follow the Lord with continual complaints against the corruption of thy will, and never leave him till he set up his Image in that,

till

till he hath bowed that to his commands, and when thou canſt ſay, his will is thine, and thy will is his, then thou art a happy Man or Woman.

Application of the ſecond Doctrine.

This day is not meaſured by the length of our lives, but the means outward or inward.

Learn hence that there is more hopes of a people, although ignorant and prophane, to whom the Goſpel is coming, than of thoſe who are more knowing, from whom the Goſpel is departing. Gods withdrawing of publick means and helps of this nature ſpeak his diſpleaſure againſt a people eminently, and tell us plainly that there is but little hopes of ſuch. When the Goſpel is coming into a dark ignorant prophane place, and declares that God hath a people there, and the day is dawning to them: but when it is going away from a people, it either argues that God hath no people there, or none more to gather, or that his work is almoſt done; it argues that the Goſpel hath been abuſed or ſlighted, and that the day of grace is drawing apace to an end to ſuch a people.

Secondly, it informs us that they who live unprofitably under means are in a farre worſe condition than thoſe who live without means. There was more hopes of the

Figtree, although it were unfruitful before it were dreſt, than there was afterwards: Before it was dreſſed the keeper of the Vineyard was in hope, that if it were digged it would bear fruit, but when the means was uſed, and no good comes of it, it leaves him hopeleſs.

Thus when we ſee men wicked and prophane, who live without the Goſpel, we ſay, oh if God would vouchſafe theſe poor ſouls the Goſpel, there were hopes of them: But we know not what to ſay, nor how to hope comfortably concerning thoſe, who continue the ſame perſons they were, notwithſtanding the Goſpel which is vouchſafed them: There is more hopes of a drunkard and ſwearer in the dark Corners, where they have not the light of the Goſpel, than there is of ſuch who continue in theſe things in the very light of the Goſpel. For there is hope of the drunkard and ſwearer who hath lived in darkneſs, that his day is not yet begun, and that God may give a day yet; But we fear that many of you who continue drunkards and ſwearers, &c. have paſt your day, that is worn out, and yet your ſouls are not healed.

Thirdly, See here a ſad miſtake under which many poor ſouls do lie. Some there are upon whoſe hearts the word of God hath

hath made ſome impreſſions, and they have been under ſome Convictions of Conſcience, and they have had ſome trouble for ſin, and ſome fears about their eternal ſtate: But theſe convictions are now abated, and their trouble for ſin grows leſs and leſs, and they come into a calm they know not how, and they bleſs themſelves in this, as if things were much better than they were. But alas they ſee not that this is the cloſing up their day, or of their eyes; they are now quiet indeed, and can ſin with leſs trouble than formerly; the Word comes not near them, and Conſcience holds her peace; but this is a miſerable ſign of a declining ſoul; look to it you who meaſure the goodneſs of your condition by the quietneſs and calmneſs of it, not by your experience of the ſoundneſs of it. Conſider that all things were in peace and quiet whilſt the ſtrong man kept the houſe, and that ſtrong man is the Divel; when Chriſt came and knock'd at the door of thy Conſcience it made ſome diſturbance, and the Divel began to buſtle and make a noiſe; but ſo ſoon as Chriſt withdraws, he lies down in his place again, ſeeing all things ſafe; as you know, if you come to a houſe in the night and knock at the doors, the Dogs will bark, but when the noiſe is over, and they perceive you are gone, they will lie

down in their kennels again; so is it in this case, when Christ comes near unto thee, and knocks by convictions, and thou art awakened, and seemest to offer at the ways of Christ, and makest a shew of reformation, then he roars upon thee and troubles thee: but if he see that thou art willing to lye still, and Christ withdraw, then Satan will be quiet also, and so thy convictions cease; consider (you that bless your selves in the cessation of convictions and checks of conscience) that the night is the stillest and most silent time, but it is the darkest; So may this time of quiet be the night of thy soul, when the former time of thy conviction was thy day. And dost thou rejoice that thy day is gone, and that night is come upon thee? oh! if thou didst but know what thou hast lost in losing a faithful convincing conscience, thou wouldest rather sit down and mourn over thy loss, than rejoice in thy peace; sin prevails over thee and thou art quiet, the word smites and thou feelest it not, duties are neglected, and thou art not troubled; oh! is this a peace to bless thy self in? art thou joyful because quiet? surely thou hast little cause.

Qu. But you still say; is it not our duty to joice in the peace of conscience? and do not the people of God do so?

Answ.

Anſ. It is one thing to have peace of conſcience, and another thing to have quiet of conſcience: An enemy comes and appears before a city, and gives it an alarum, and perhaps he withdraws without ſtorming of it. Upon the withdrawing of the enemy there is quiet, they are freed from the fears of a preſent ſtorm; but there is no peace concluded betwixt them, and the enemy perhaps is but withdrawn to thy loſs. If they had come to a treaty, and articles of agreement had been drawn up, and the enemy had departed upon theſe, then they might have rejoyced in their peace: but a wiſe man will not ſay ſuch an enemy is at peace with us; onely they are quiet for the time: but there is no cauſe to be ſecure concerning ſuch a one ſo long as an enemy; perhaps he is but ſtepped back to take a better advantage, as we find he did with Chriſt, he left tempting of him, that he might tempt him the more dangerouſly. Oh! therefore enquire whether your quiet calm eſtate ariſe from the ſlumbering conſcience, or from the treaty with it, and agreement: Has it been hearkened to, and anſwered, and pacified? An enemy may ſleep ſometimes in his Tent, and he makes no noiſe, not becauſe he is reconciled, but becauſe he is aſleep, yet a ſleeping enemy is an enemy, and thou maieſt

know it when he awakes, that it had been better that he had been kept waking; if thy quiet be from the sleepiness of thy conscience; not from the satisfaction of it, thou shalt find it had been better it had never slumbered, that it will awake like a Gyant, and set upon thee with so much the more fierceness. It is one thing to have troubles of conscience removed by satisfying the conscience, & another thing to have them removed by searing the conscience. A man is in a Lethargie, and he lies still and feels no pain, he complains not, but his friends stand weeping about him, because they know not whether he will awake again or not; but they weep not over one that is in a sleep, because they know that rest is sweet, but the other dangerous, and often deadly: Thus the case is with thee; Thou art now quiet, and conscience smites thee not, thou complainest not; oh! but thy godly friends and relations mourn over thee, they stand by thee as a dying man. Oh! sayes one, I had hopes of my Husband, or my Wife, or my child, or my friend; he or she was under some convictions for sin, and it seemed to me his eyes began to open, and he strugled for life; I saw an outward change for a time, and I hoped it would be a real effectual work, but oh! my hopes are almost dead, I

see

see that conscience begins to be quiet, and he begins to be careless, and see how he is by little and little sliding back into his former wayes: oh! I am afraid he will fall into a spirit of slumber, and go to hell in it. I had abundantly more hopes of his condition when he had less.

But these very souls which mourne over thee, rejoyce to see another soul quiet: they are glad to hear of the comforts with which God hath comforted some poor doubting souls, because they see that such souls came by their peace in another way. Their peace is like natural sleep to the body, it refreshes their souls, and they are the stronger and the more lively for God, but thine is a disease and spends and weakens it. God hath given them peace by sprinkling their consciences with the blood of Christ. But thy peace is from the hardness and insensiblenes of it, thou art almost past feeling.

Secondly, It is one thing to measure our condition by our peace, and another thing to measure it by the soundnes of this peace. A carnal and wicked man measures his condition by the presence or absence of peace and trouble; If his conscience be troubled, and there be any impressions made for sin, he judges that condition sad, and he labours

all

all waies possible to take off such trouble. As *Felix*, as soon as ever the word made him tremble, he sends away *Paul*, that he might be quiet; because he does not see the good which may follow such a trouble. But a gracious heart counts his condition the better for such troubles at first, and counts it a mercy that God would any way awaken him: and although he lie under many fears, yet he expects much good from such troubles, and would not be rid of them but upon good grounds: and although he doth pray constantly to be delivered from those troubles, yet he would not have been without them for the world, neither would he go back to his former condition, though he were sure thereby to be rid of his troubles.

Again when a gracious soul doth get peace, he doth not content himself barely with peace, but he examines what manner of peace he hath gotten; whether it be an holy peace, yea or no, whether it be better than his trouble; for, sayes he, although I wanted peace, and I sought for that, yet the Lord knows that was not all I sought for; I sought for holiness, and for communion with God, and if I know my heart, I had rather be kept without peace in my spirit, and yet close to God, than come neerer to peace and to go farther off from God. Therefore unless

unleſs he can ſee his peace is a holy gracious peace, accompanied with the fruits of the ſpirit, and with communion with God, it will not pleaſe him; but if the heart be carnal under trouble, it is careleſs under a calm; and ſo it hath freedom from the ſtorm it is enough. It is a miſtake therefore when you ſay that the people of God do meaſure their conditions by the peaceableneſs of it. No no, they meaſure it by the goodneſs and ſoundneſs of the peace that they have, and they ſuſpend their joy till they have proved and tryed their peace.

Thirdly, you miſtake the peace of the ſoul; for it does not conſiſt in a freedom from conviction of ſin, nor in a ceſſation of the tenderneſs of conſcience, and a loſs of the ſenſe of the evil of it; but it lies in the evidence of the pardon of ſin, which is ſpoken in to the conſcience, by which it anſwers all objections that are brought againſt it. For the people of God, who have moſt of this peace, have all theſe things yet remaining; Their peace ſtands with all theſe, but thine is built upon the abſence and want of theſe. As firſt, a gracious heart hath peace, yet it hath convictions of ſin. 1 *Joh.* 1. 8. *If we ſay we have no ſin*, &c. Nay he hath more convictions of ſin than before, he ſees more ſin in himſelf than ever he ſaw

in all his life. *Job* 42. 5, 6. *I have ſeen the Lord, I abhorre my ſelf*; and *Ezekiel* 16. 63. *You ſhall be aſhamed and confounded, when I am pacified towards you.* Yet this does not break his peace, becauſe he ſees ſin and pardon together, and the peace does not leſſen the ſight of ſin, but makes it plainer to him. But your peace is only in the ceſſation of convictions; you ſee not ſin as you did, and therefore you are not troubled; if thine eyes were open, and thou didſt ſee thy ſinne as the people of God do, it would revive thy troubles again. Thy peace is falſe, becauſe it conſiſteth not with conviction; if thou hadſt a true peace, it would heighten thy Convictions, thou wouldeſt ſee more ſin than ever yet thou didſt, and thoſe more clearly which thou haſt ſeen already, *Rom.* 7. 9. *When the Law came, ſin revived and I died.* This is ſpoken of *Paul* after he had obtained the pardon of ſin; and he that before ſaw nothing blame-worthy in himſelf, ſaw afterwards nothing but a body of ſin and death.

Secondly, The ſoul may be charged for ſin, and yet have peace. He may be charged by God as *Iſrael* is, *Ezek.* 16. But this is to humble it. It may be charged by its own conſcience; as *Paul*, *Rom.* 7. 18, 19. *In my fleſh dwells no good thing.*

He

He may be charged by Satan, as we finde that he is ready to charge the people of God, and tempt them to doubt of their intereſt. But yet the ſoul may have an anſwer to all theſe in the blood of Chriſt. A ſoul may have notwithſtanding all that is alledged, peace with *Paul*, *Rom.* 8 33, 34. and ſtand out and ſay, though I am daily charged, and I cannot but charge my ſelf, *yet who ſhall condemne? it is Chriſt that hath dyed.* So that you ſee a believers peace conſiſteth with theſe things. But thy peace is in this; Time was that thou wert troubled for ſinne, and thou couldeſt not eat or drink, or ſleep quietly for it, but now you thank God it is otherwiſe. God began to charge thee for ſin, and conſcience was ſtirred, and thou wert afraid, and perhaps Satan began to charge thee too. For when God begins to charge for ſin, to mind it of Chriſt, *Rev.* 3. 17. then the Devil he charges to drive the ſoul to deſpaire, *Jer.* 18. 12. And you ſhall ſee whether the hand of God or Satan be moſt in the trouble by theſe two things, whilſt the trouble continues: you ſhall know by obſerving whether the deſires after Chriſt, or the fears of wrath and hell are the greateſt; when the Trouble ends you ſhall know by the continuation of ſuch deſires after Chriſt. For if Gods hand be moſt

in

in ſuch troubles for good he will keep up the ſoul after himſelf when the trouble is over. But if Satans hand be principal in them, then they loſe all thoſe ſeeming deſires which they had after Chriſt. Oh you who have loſt your ſeeming zeal for God with your troubles of conſcience, Conſider, it is to be feared, that Satan onely troubled to keep thee off from Chriſt; he ſaw that God began to ſtir in the word, and he thought it was time for him to ſtir alſo; But when he ſaw that God began to ceaſe ſtriving with thee, and thou beganſt to grow cold again, he ceaſed to trouble thee alſo, and hence is thy quiet: if Satan ſhould but ſtir again, he would ſhake thy peace, and this he would do if he ſaw any danger of loſing thee, but he knows this peace is a likelier way to hold thee than ſuch a trouble; But Gods people have a peace in deſpite of all his moleſtations.

A believers peace does not deſtroy the tendernes of his conſcience, nor his ſenſibleneſs of the evil of ſin: for he is more ſenſible of ſin, than he was before; he ſees the evil of it more, though the danger be not ſo much. He is ſenſible of the ſmalleſt ſin, and there is no ſin which he now does account ſo; when he was under terrours of conſcience he looked upon his groſs ſins, and his

fears

fears did ariſe principally from them, but now he looks upon his ſecret ſins, and his grief is for them. So that he ſaies when a temptation comes, how can I do this thing and ſinne againſt God ?

But the carnal mans peace is much built upon his inſenſibleneſs, he ſees the evil of ſin leſſe than he did, he feels conſcience leſs, and conſcience feels ſin leſs ; a little thing will not trouble it now, and therefore he hath peace. But I tell you, this is a miſtaken peace which is built upon theſe things ; For you ſee Gods people keep theſe, yea increaſe ſome of them as their peace is eſtabliſhed ; But if thou hadſt not loſt theſe, thou hadſt not found peace ; and it is a miſerable peace which is gotten by the loſs of the tenderneſs of the conſcience.

Fourthly, the people of God would judge themſelves for the loſs of their troubles, if experience were not left in the place of them : the freedom from trouble would trouble them ; they would count it a very ill change in their condition to change trouble for peace ; if they could not experience another change with this in their ſouls. Such a ſoul would ſay, Time was that my conſcience was awakened, and I was ſenſible of ſinne, and when I did ſtep aſide, I was troubled, and I could not be at quiet for want

of

of the evidences of Gods love, and of my eternal intereſt; but how is it now? there is a calm in my ſpirit; but if my condition be as bad as it was when I was firſt troubled, if my troubles be abated, if my condition be now altered, oh! then my condition is much worſe; ſo much the worſe by how much the more quiet it is. But here is that that ſtaies the ſoul of Gods people, and ſatisfies their ſpirits. Oh ſayes ſuch a one, I find bleſſed be God, a change in my ſoul, ſutable to this change from trouble to peace. I find I was much troubled before for my ſins, but I was ignorant of Chriſt; But bleſſed be God he hath revealed him to me for pardon.

I did perform duty before, but I reſted in it, bleſſed be God for the change, I can do it now and deny it. I was troubled before for the neglect of duty, but I am now more grieved for the want of Gods preſence in a duty. When I was troubled before, I fled to my duties for eaſe, but now I go to the promiſes for it. I was troubled before, becauſe I looked upon God in a covenant of works, but now I look upon him in a covenant of grace.

When I was troubled, then I lookt upon my groſs ſinnes onely, but now I look to my ſecret ſinnes, and I mourn over that which no

no eye ſees. I was troubled becauſe I was afraid of hell, and I could apprehend no pardon for my ſin; but now I am troubled for ſin which I am ſure is pardoned. I was in much horrour of conſcience, and I cried out, I ſhall be damned, and my trouble made a noiſe, yet now I have another manner of trouble for ſin; it is as burthenſome and as bitter to me as ever, and I hate it more than ever, and now I mourn for it, and melt away in the confuſion of my face under the diſcovery of Gods free pardon of my ſin. Whilſt I was in trouble, that kept me cloſe to duty, although it did not make me love the duty, neither did it mortifie my corruption; But I find now that my peace kept me cloſe to duty alſo, yea and it makes duty ſweet to me, and it does carry me more after holineſs than my fears did. For then I did ſtudy ſo much reformation as might ſerve to quiet my conſcience, but now I labour to be holy as God is holy, 1 *Joh.* 3. 3.

Thus the gracious ſoul by comparing his preſent peace with his paſt troubles, is comforted by the experience, which is left inſtead of ſuch and ſuch troubles, under which it was formerly: And if it could find none of theſe, or ſuch as theſe, it would judge it ſelf for the loſs of ſuch troubles, although thou doeſt bleſs thy ſelf for this, that thy troubles

troubles are over, and all is quiet, but all this while thou haſt no experience of a change in thy ſoul.

Fifthly, Saints judge it better to be troubled for ſinne, than to walk quietly in it; and they had rather want a little peace themſelves, than that ſin ſhould have too much: It is ſinne hath gotten peace, thou haſt none; ſinne hath leave to be quiet in thy ſoul, thou wert troubled for thy drunkenneſs, thy ſwearing, or thy uncleanneſs, or thy ſcoffing, and thy Sabbath-breaking, and at the neglecting of duties; becauſe of theſe things Conſcience would not let thee be quiet; but now God hath ſaid to conſcience, let him alone, he loves theſe ſinnes, though he pretends to be troubled for them, let him go on, and enjoy them quietly; and now thou art a drunkard again and quiet, a ſwearer and quiet, an unclean perſon and quiet, a Sabbath-breaker and quiet, thou layeſt aſide duties, and yet are quiet; oh! let me tell thee if the people of God were to chooſe; (although they would not be in thy condition for a world) yet if they muſt chooſe one, they would rather be under thy former troubles, and thereby to be kept out of the Alehouſe, and thereby be kept to reading, and prayer, than have thy peace which opens a way

to

to all thy former looſe practices again. They judged thee in a better condition, and had more hopes of thee when thou wert under trouble of ſpirit and didſt make conſcience of ſin, than now, that thou haſt a peace which gives thee liberty to ſin as in former times: The people of God would not have thy peace for the world.

Lay all theſe things together, and thou wilt eaſily ſee that thy peace is not to be joyed in, and although it be true that Gods people do account a quiet conſcience a great mercy, yet it is not ſuch a quietneſs as thine is, neither is it a bare quietneſs which they rejoyce in, but the goodneſs of the conſcience: But thine is ſuch a quietneſs as is a Curſe, and ariſes from a Judgement of God in blinding thine eyes, in hardning thine heart, and withdrawing all his Goſpel-light from thee: There was a difference betwixt the people of God and thee in the time of trouble, and ſo there is a vaſt one now; when they were under trouble of conſcience, yet they had a good conſcience, although it were not quiet; now they have a good conſcience and quiet, ſo that is much better. Thou hadſt an evil conſcience when it was troubled, it was but awakened, it was not ſanctified. But now it is quiet and

and evil, it is the worse. For although it were not then renewed, yet being inlightned it did perform its duty to thee in some measure, which now it neglects, and so thy latter end is like to be worse than thy beginning. Therefore oh man or woman, who hast concluded that it was better with thee than formerly, because thou art quieter, thou art under a sad mistake; for thy Condition is not grown better, but thine eyes are grown worse.

Fourthly, if the day end under means, oh! then what reason is there to shake off security, and to give diligent heed least any thing slip by us that we hear. Men are ready to say to the Word, as *Felix* did, Come another time: But it is a question, whither God will wait upon thee any more or not; perhaps he'l give a Commission to his Messengers to speak no more, he will send them to another people; Or if it doe come againe, it may never come with that heat and light that it comes now to thee; the Word which is now a spirited Word, may be a dead cold Word ever after to thee. *Felix* put off the Word when it came in some power; He might have heard many Sermons before he met with such a-

no-

nother. Oh let not the probability of enjoying the means make thee ſecure under it. Thou ſayeſt perhaps, if thou wert likely to have no more of it, thou wouldeſt then liſten to the preſent word, and the Convictions of it. Oh but what if thou wert ſure yet to enjoy the Word, art thou ſure to finde it a convincing Word? thou mayeſt have it then; but if God hath withdrawne the inlightning convincing power from it, what difference will there be betwixt thee, and him that hath no word? oh how little is this conſidered and minded by the greateſt part of men! they hear as if they were ſure to hear againe, and as if there were no danger of being loſt under the word; they ſay they have the meanes, and there is no ſuch haſte, if we hear it not to day, we may hear it to morrow; we ſhall have the ſame Word then, which we have now, and it will be well if we liſten to it then: But though you ſhould have the ſame Word, and the ſame perſons which ſpake the Word to you then, yet you may finde it as another thing to you then; the word may be now a convincing Word, there may be ſome ſpirit and power in it now, and then it may be otherwiſe to thee;

God

God may have withdrawne all convincing quickning comforting power from it, and then it will seem to thee that it is not the same Word that it was; thou mayest hear the same things which stirre thee now, and not be moved at all, and then if God be withdrawne from his ordinances, it is all one as if he had taken them away too.

Oh take this into your Consideration, you who do enjoy a constant Ministry, and have the Word constantly preacht to you, listen to it as if it were departing from you; for though the Word it self continue, yet if the Spirit depart from it; thy soul is undone. If you had but a little time to live, or but a little time to hear the Word, thou wouldest be perswaded to look after it. But oh these may be true, one or both; but suppose neither be true, that thy life be not short, nor the means short, yet let me tell thee, the time in which God will strive with thy soul may be short, yea very short. There is a prefixed time set for thee to come in to Christ, which if thou passest over, if thou diddest live to *Methuselahs* age, and haddest the choi-

ceſt

ceſt means under heaven, yet thou ſhouldeſt not be converted. If thou haddeſt an aſſurance that any time in thy life would ſerve the turn, yet thou haſt no reaſon to delay; for thy life is very uncertain and ſhort for this great work: But the means is more uncertain; thou art not ſure that the Goſpel ſhall always ſound in thine ears. Oh but Gods ſtriving with thy heart is moſt uncertain, for who knows how ſoon he will give over to ſtruggle with thee? Thy life is a very inconſiderable thing, becauſe of the ſhortneſs of it; it is but a moment in compariſon of eternity; Oh but the day of grace is a ſhort thing in compariſon of thy life. Take heed of careleſneſs, as if thou didſt know that thy day of grace would hold to the laſt day of thy life.

8 We never read that converſion and death met together in one day, ſave to one man, which was the Thief on the Croſs; it was to one, to prevent deſpair in them whoſe eyes are then opened; and it was but to one, that none might preſume upon ſuch a time before it come.

If ſuch a day, and it hath ſuch an end, and it leave men under ſuch an irreco-

God may have withdrawne all convincing quickning comforting power from it, and then it will ſeem to thee that it is not the ſame Word that it was; thou mayeſt hear the ſame things which ſtirre thee now, and not be moved at all, and then if God be withdrawne from his ordinances, it is all one as if he had taken them away too.

Oh take this into your Conſideration, you who do enjoy a conſtant Miniſtry, and have the Word conſtantly preacht to you, liſten to it as if it were departing from you; for though the Word it ſelf continue, yet if the Spirit depart from it; thy ſoul is undone. If you had but a little time to live, or but a little time to hear the Word, thou wouldeſt be perſwaded to look after it. But oh theſe may be true, one or both; but ſuppoſe neither be true, that thy life be not ſhort, nor the means ſhort, yet let me tell thee, the time in which God will ſtrive with thy ſoul may be ſhort, yea very ſhort. There is a prefixed time ſet for thee to come in to Chriſt, which if thou paſſeſt over, if thou diddeſt live to *Methuſelahs* age, and haddeſt the choi-

ceſt

ceſt means under heaven, yet thou ſhouldeſt not be converted. If thou haddeſt an aſſurance that any time in thy life would ſerve the turn, yet thou haſt no reaſon to delay; for thy life is very uncertain and ſhort for this great work: But the means is more uncertain; thou art not ſure that the Goſpel ſhall always ſound in thine ears. Oh but Gods ſtriving with thy heart is moſt uncertain, for who knows how ſoon he will give over to ſtruggle with thee? Thy life is a very inconſiderable thing, becauſe of the ſhortneſs of it; it is but a moment in compariſon of eternity; Oh but the day of grace is a ſhort thing in compariſon of thy life. Take heed of careleſneſs, as if thou didſt know that thy day of grace would hold to the laſt day of thy life.

We never read that converſion and death met together in one day, ſave to one man, which was the Thief on the Croſs; it was to one, to prevent deſpair in them whoſe eyes are then opened; and it was but to one, that none might preſume upon ſuch a time before it come.

If ſuch a day, and it hath ſuch an end, and it leave men under ſuch an irreco-

verable condition, then take hold of the preſent time, while it is called to day; Becauſe thou art ſure onely of the preſent; there is a night coming when no man can work; not onely a night of death, but a night of ſpirituall ſlumber, wherein thou ſhalt walk up and down, with eyes blinded, underſtanding darkened, affections alienated from God, Conſcience ſeared with a black mark of ruine and perdition, upon thy ſoul; when thou ſhalt not onely be without ſenſe, but paſt ſenſe, paſt ſeeing, and paſt feeling, and paſt hopes: when thou ſhalt think that thou ſeeſt, and yet ſeeſt not, and think that thou perceiveſt, and yet ſhalt be blind as the Mole, having no true underſtanding of God, nor of thy own condition before him. Oh when this night comes upon thee, woe unto thee, thy work muſt needs lie behind for ever. If you could but foreſee ſuch a thing as this is, and did believe indeed that it would come upon thee, wouldeſt thou not lay aſide all delaies, and bethink thy ſelf of improving this inch of time which thou haſt for Eternitie.

I beſeech you all therefore in the Lord, be perſwaded to conſider of this thing, it is a great thing that I am treating about, lay it to your hearts, and lay about you as thoſe who have but a little time to mind a great buſineſs.

Think of theſe things.

Firſt, Some think themſelves too great to think on ſuch things, they have great cares and many incumbrances.

Secondly, Many think they are not great enough, when they are riſen to ſuch a height in honour or eſtate, then they will mind it: and ſome too young, another time will ſerve. All theſe put it off to another time. A death-bed, there they appoint conſcience to meet them and debate the buſineſs.

Two great general deceits run thorow mens hearts.

Firſt, They pretend that they will comply with the Goſpel; Few will ſay in plain terms, *We will not have Chriſt reign over us*, or, *we will never hear any more of this matter*, but they will appoint another time, as they judge moſt convenient, not conſidering that the time they dreame

of, may not come at all, or if it does, it may be no time for this; the time for this work may be past.

Secondly, they act for the world, as if their being rich & great did depend upon a day; but as if the busines of their souls had no dependance on the advantage of time; but the Scripture speaks otherwise, it has set thee a day for thy soul, which if thou neglect thou shalt lose; but for the world, that may be had in the last place. *Mat. 6. First seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousnes thereof.* Great men, mind this, you have but a day, you may neglect the time, and God will be as strict with you as others in this, and you have many hindrances, and les helps than others. *Therefore not many rich*, &c.

Secondly, to poor; you have a day too, although not to be rich and honourable, yet to be happy, if you neglect it not.

It is a word of exhortation to you all; to old ones, you have spent a great deal of time, and what provision have you made for eternity? If your day be not over, yet you cannot expect, that yours will last long, you cannot expect to enjoy many daies

daies in the fleſh; and if this be a truth which you have heard from the Word, you are in a great deal of danger, and it is high time for you to awake.

2. It ſpeaks alſo to you that are young ones, and bleſs your ſelves in the prime of your daies, & beginning of your ſtrength, it ſpeaks to you in that of the Wiſe-man, *Ec.* 12. 1. *Remember now thy Creator.*

Do not ſay, In my old age, no, but do it in thy youth nor yet, I will do it in my Youth, but not yet but ſet about it now. I ſay to thee as Chriſt did to *Judas*, *What thou doeſt, do it quickly.* Do not ſay, Thy years are but few yet, and thy daies are but begun; for ought thou knoweſt the day of Grace may be almoſt done, although the daies of thy life are but begun; this Goſpel-day is nearer to an end than thou art aware off: thou haſt no aſſurance of life, but much leſs aſſurance of this; if you did believe this, how would it rouſe up your ſpirits, and provoke you to take heed of every o, portunity for your ſouls?

5. If it be ſo, then take heed of ſlighting convictions, and the ſtruglings of conſcience, for theſe are the critica' times of your lives, then you are near to making or marring, now is the time or never.

And although thou art called to be ſerious at all times, yet more eſpecially now thy eternal happineſs lies at the ſtake; and when God begins to ſtruggle with thee, it will be ſeen in a ſhort time whether thou wilt be eternally happy or miſerable. This part of thy life is like to thoſe critical dayes which Phyſicians obſerve, when either the diſeaſe abates, and breaks, or kills: So now, either thou wilt grow better or worſe after this, either the day will break, and darkneſs will fly away and ſcatter, or elſe the night will begirt thee, and thy darkneſs will be much blacker than it was. Have a care therefore all you who come to the ordinance and find any ſtirrings upon your conſciences, leſt you neglect this time.

Firſt, Becauſe now God is near unto you, I may draw an exhortation out of the Apoſtles words, *Act.* 17. 27. Now feel after God if happily you may finde him, for he is not farre from you; he is now with you, and in you, by his enlightning and convincing power, now is the time if ever for ſuch a word to take place, as we have, *Iſa.* 55. 6. *Seek him whiles he may bee found.* If ever God were near you in a way of mercy,

it

it is now; he is not onely near you by his Goſpel, but in it, he comes in it, and with it; he ſends the ſpirit with the Word, if thou doſt ſlight theſe motions, thou mayeſt never find him ſo near thee; if he once go out of his Word and leave thee without a convincing light and power, he then will go further and further from you, and then we may ſay, woe to you, when God is departed from you, *Hoſ.* 9 12. This is one of the firſt ſteps of Gods forſaking Souls, when he forſakes the Word under which they ſit, and it is in order to that dreadfull ſentence, *Mat.* 25. 41. *Depart from me ye curſed, &c.* O therefore as you would not hear that dreadful Sentence then, fear it now; loſe God now, and thou art like to loſe him for ever; But if thou wouldeſt keep him now and poſſeſs him then, ſo keep and cheriſh his convictions: take heed of ſlighting theſe, for it is a ſlighting of God, and if thou ſlight him while he is near thee, thou wilt drive him further off quickly.

Be more careful now then ever, becauſe the day ſpends apace, it haſts away more than ever; you know when the ſun comes

at the higheſt, he declines apace; when the days are at their length, they do ſhorten quickly, & when its noon, the ſun haſtens to his bed. This time of Gods ſtirring with thee by conviction is as thy Noon-day; if thou ſlight that, thy day will decline apace, it will not be long ere it be night; therefore while it is not only day, but noon-day, work; for there is but a little time betwixt noon and night. Nay let me tell thee, thy day of Grace is not like the natural day or year. You know the ſun is as long deſcending as aſcending: and therefore the after-noon is as long as the fore-noon: But it will not be ſo with thee; thou mayeſt have a long morning, and a ſhort noon, and a ſpeedy night. It may be long ere God does begin to ſtrive with thee; he may let thee live twenty, thirty, or forty years before he comes thus near thee; all this while is but as thy fore-noon; and then he may come near thy Conſcience, This is the noon of thy day, and here he may continue ſtrugling with thee for a year, a month, a week, a day, nay perhaps but one hour, as with *Felix*, with whom God ſtrugled but one hour in one Sermon: and if thou wilt not now hear, the night ſhall gather upon thee, and thou ſhalt be ſhut up under darkneſs;

darkneſs; God will reſerve to ſtruggle but a little while, and he will not be ſo long in departing as he was in coming; but if noon be paſt, night comes ſuddenly; he may be long a coming, but quickly gone from thee.

3. Be more careful now becauſe God proportions the length of our day to the clearneſs of the means which thou enjoyeſt, and to the ſtrength of thy convictions. If God give men little means, then he allows them the more time; if he gives them more means, he gives them the leſs time for this great work. I do believe, that under the Law when things were dark, and in former dayes, when the Goſpel was but little preacht to what now it is, God did give men a longer and larger ſpace for repentance than he does now. *Mat.* 3. 10. he waited longer upon ſinners than he now does or will. And as the proportions to the means, ſo to our convictions. If he do ſtrive much with a Soul and cauſe convictions to fall thick and ſtrong upon it, it is an argument that he intends to contend but a little while with that ſoul, if he ſlight them. He will ſpeedly convert that ſoul or harden it. As we ſee in *Felix*, God did ſtrive

but a little while, but it was in a notable way, he made him tremble, but we do not finde that he did ſtrive any more after that fit was over. Wee ſee ſomething of this in Nature, thoſe places and people who lye directly under the Sun, and have moſt of the heat and fervour of it, have not ſo long daies in ſummer as they who live more remote from it; as we in *England* have longer daies at Midſummer, than they that live under the Line; and they in *Scotland* have longer than we: So it is like to be with thee, if thy means be choice, and thy convictions ſtrong, thy nay is like to be ſhorter; have a care therefore that thou doſt not ſlight the one, or the other,

4 Be carefull now, becauſe thou doſt not know whether ever God will ſtrive any more with thee, if now thou ſlighteſt theſe, theſe may conclude thy day, and ſeal up thy condition; thou haſt no ſooner an intimation by theſe that thy day is begun, but thou haſt an hint that it may be ending. The ſame word which begins to open thine eyes, tels thee, that it is not long ere they may be ſhut again: God ſtands at thy heart and knocks, he promiſes thee, That if thou wilt open hee will come in, but he does not pro-

promiſe thee to continue knocking; if thou wilt open ſaies he, I will come in; if thou will not open, I will be gone. I will leave thee. Say not to the Word, Come again, for perhaps it will never come ſo again; God will not have thee deal ſo with thy neighbour, *Prov.* 3. 28. and doſt thou thinke he will be dealt ſo withal? Is it not a great Mercy that he will come once to thee? Is it not a baſe and unworthy thing for thee to thinke, that the great God of Heaven and Earth ſhould wait upon ſuch a vile wretch as thou art? Nay, it is not juſt that the Lord ſhould reſolve to offer thee life no more, and that he ſhould diſdain to follow thee any longer, who haſt refuſed him once, and again? therefore be careful, becauſe convictions ſlighted provoke the Lord to withdraw them, and once withdrawn, it is a queſtion whether ever they wil come again.

5 Be carefull now, becauſe if this day be loſt, all is loſt, it is ſuch a loſs as includes in it all other loſſes; it is the loſſe of God, of happineſs, and comfort of thy Soul, of eternal life, of that ſalvation which thou haſt perhaps hoped for.

It

It is a loſs not to be ſupplied, becauſe when this is paſt, comes a night, and in it no man can work or walk. This night is a very black night indeed, there is no light in it at all. God made a leſſer light to rule the night, as well as a greater to rule the day; he did not leave the night wholly deſtitute; ſo that though the night be not a time to travel in, yet if a man be caſt behind in his journy, he may find his way by the light of the moon, or ſtars; theſe do borrow a light of the ſun, and they do help in his abſence, and give notice that he is not wholly gone: But this night hath no light to rule it; darkneſs, blackneſs of darkneſs rules in it; There is no working in this night, becauſe no light; the word which is left behind gives no light to the ſoul when God hath withdrawn; he carries away all light with him, all true ſaving light; ſo that a man ſhall never ſee any thing aright. He leaves no light in providences, in Ordinances, in afflictions; they do not all of them bring a man to ſee God, or his own condition aright: But all theſe things do become to the Soul as thoſe falſe fires in the night, which do lead men out of their way. The word does but harden the heart, and blinde the eyes, and miſ-

lead

lead men, and fill them with false presumptuous hopes, which when they awake will deceive them. O now if there be a day, and after this day a night, and this night may come so suddenly, thou dost not know how soon, and this night have no provision for it, how great folly and indiscretion is it for to spend the light of this precious day, and to neglect those stirrings of God upon thy conscience, by which thou art solicited to return to him! *Now and ever, Now or never.*

6. If so, then if it be time for some, I am sure it is high time for others; If it were time for them to awake, because salvation was coming nearer to them, then I am sure it is time for them to awake from whom salvation is departing, *Rom* 13.11. There is no dallying with light when it comes, because it is uncertain how long it will continue, but there is much less reason to dally with that which is certainly going. There are some that are but in the morning of this day, others are in the noon of it, others again in the wane of it; Now if he that hath but seen the morning of it, may soon be benighted, and he that hath the light of the noon may soon be overshaddowed with darkness,

neſſe, and no man hath reaſon to bee ſecure becauſe of his day; how much leſſe ſhalt thou, becauſe in all probability thou art near to night. O therefore you who have ſpent much of your time, and have lived long under the means, and yet you are either without any Convictions, or have almoſt loſt thoſe which you have had, if there be any ſpark of light or affection found ſtirring in you, blow it up; reſolve now to improve that little time that is left; you may poſſibly do more by that inch which is left, than by all that thou haſt enjoyed already; a little time ſpent for God, and for the intereſt of thy ſoul, may be of more advantage to thee, than the many Months, and Years, which have been layed out for the profits, honours, or pleaſures of the World; and that I may quicken you to this, Conſider, that as every one hath an uncertain time to look after this great work, and it is very uncertain how long or ſhort the day of Grace wil be; ſo there are many of you who certainly have but a ſhort time, by all ſigns and tokens you are upon the very borders of darkneſs and death, You have the Symptoms of a people who are even come to the laſt hour of the day; if your

day

day be not quite done, it is almoſt; and although we cannot expreſly ſay of particular perſons that your day is over, neither would I preach it, if I could, yet we may, and ſhew you in what danger you are, that we may warn you. I ſhal lay down ſome things which do ſpeak a people neer to the night; I beſeech you go along with me, and make application to your own hearts, and ſee whether theſe things do concern you or not, & how far.

Signs that the day is near done.

Firſt, When perſons remain ignorant under the means a long time, and having great means for Conviction, yet ſlight all; this was *Iſraels* caſe, *Numb.* 14. 11. God calls this a provocation, when they had enjoyed ſo many teſtimonies of the power, and of the truth of God, & yet they would not liſten to him, they would not be obedient; the means of Conviction had been ſo plain and clear, that God could not bear their unbeleef any longer, he threatens therefore to diſinherit them. O hath not this been your caſe? have you not enioyed the word in that plainneſs that you might eaſily have bin convinc'd long ſince of your pride, covetouſneſs,

touſneſs, Uncleanneſs, Drunkeneſs, Sabbath breaking; nay, thou mighteſt have ſeen thy unbelief, and the irregeneracy of thy heart: thou haſt had things ſo plainly brought home to thee, that if thou wouldeſt have uſed thy reaſon, and have ſuffered conſcience to ſpeak, thou hadſt been convinced of thy loſt condition long ago; and yet thou goeſt on in thoſe things which the word condemns, and tells thee that thy ways are not the ways of Gods people; yet thou goeſt on careleſly and ſecurely, and cryeſt peace, peace; this is a provocation. Thou haſt been plainly ſhewn what formality is, and what unbelief is, and what are the ſigns of a Regenerate & unregenerate condition, that if thou wouldeſt but make application to thy ſelf, & bring the Word & thy condition together, thou couldeſt not but ſee that thy condition is dangerous; yet thou wilt not be convinced, thou wilt not examine and try thy heart and come to a reſult concerning thy Soul; ſtrong ſecurity after much plainneſs in Preaching, and clearneſs in the means of conviction, ſpeaks a people near to hardening, and that their day is almoſt at an end.

2. When men have clear convictions of the truth, and their condition, and

of

of their duty, and yet hold the truth in unrighteousnes, *Rom.* 1. 18. κατεχόντων such as forcibly hold the Truth, and inslave it, will not suffer it go its own way; the truth bids them do one thing, and they would do another; they have will of conscience, that would go for God, that would be for Prayer, and for reading the word, and for hearing; but there is the will of their affections, and that is for the world, and for the Ale-house, or for this pleasure, or for that lust; so that these men draw their consciences after them, as you lead a Dog in a slip, he must go your way by force. They have gotten so much of the knowledg of the truth to convince them, that it is their duty to pray in the Family, and in the Closet; and conscience minds them of this, and sollicits them to go this way, and to begin the day thus; but the affections they go after their covetousnes; the thoughts of his calling comes in, some designe for profit calls him off, and he goes away and slights conscience; or the thought of his pleasure comes to him, and he must attend that, so that he imprisons the truth under unrighteousnes; and although conscience goes grudgingly up and down, and grumbles at him while

while he is in the Alehouſe, or in his calling, in his pleaſures, or elſewhere, and tels him that he ſhould have been doing ſomething elſe that while; yet it is all one, he keeps it under like a ſlave, and drags after him, while he ſatisfies his Luſt.

Such as theſe are mentioned in two Scriptures; the firſt is he that keeps it in a Negative unrighteouſneſs, or an unrighteouſneſs of omiſſion, *Luke* 12.47. who dos not follow the truth in thoſe things which are clearly revealed to him, it is ſaid, *that he ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes,*

The ſecond is he who holds truth in a poſitive unrighteouſneſs, or an unrighteouſneſs of Commiſſion, who does not only refuſe to follow the light and truth into thoſe duties which it would lead him unto, but runs againſt the clear light and truth into the contrary practiſes, which the light and truth do abhor; Theſe are ſpoken of, *Rom.* 1.32. Such men carry a conviction of the juſtice of that ſentence which God wil paſs upon thoſe who walke in ſuch wayes, and yet they both do them and delight in them; and if you obſerve how theſe men came to the height of wickedneſs, it was firſt

of

of all by not walking with and after their light, that they came so boldly at last against it, *vers.* 21. Thus you see, that this contradicting and forcing the light and truth received into the understanding, borders on this night, for you see it is presently added, after he had given an instance of such as did thus hold the truth in unrighteousnes, that *they became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened, vers.* 21. God punishes this perverseness of the will with blindness of minde, and it is fit that hee who would not use an eye should have never an eye. O now bring this home to your own souls.

Be there not many of you who walk in the Omission of known duties, such things as you cannot but be acquainted withal? How many prayerless Families be there here, and yet the Master of the Family knows it is his duty to pray with, and for his Family, and to instruct and command them concerning the fear of the Lord? How many prayerless souls bee here, that seldom or never seek the Lord in private? O if I should run thorow particular known duties, how many should wee finde guilty? and if Conscience would stand, it would say,

This

This is a known duty, and yet I live in a conſtant or general neglect of it; Ile name but one, and it is a great and plain one, 2 *Cor.* 13, 5. *Prove your ſelves, whether ye be in the faith or not.* It is a word ſpoken to ſuch as had been owned for Saints; there were many ſtrong probabilities that they were ſuch, yet theſe are adviſed to make diligent ſearch into their hearts, and to bring themſelves to the touchſtone. But do you do ſo? How many be there here that never ſpent a ſerious hour in all their lives in debating this queſtion, whether Chriſt be in them or not? they think it is enough to believe that God is merciful, and that they are Chriſtians; and it is a ſhorter way to believe than to prove it. It is every man and womans duty ſolemnly to ſearch the Scripture, and to ſearch their hearts, and bring theſe two together, and then come to a ſerious reſolution, Is Chriſt in me or not of a truth? But are there not many here that are ſo far from ſearching the ſcripture in order to this work, that they will not make uſe of thoſe things which do immediately concern their condition when they are brought to their hands out of the word? how long would it be ere ſuch ſouls would ſearch the Scriptures them-

themſelves to find out the ſtate of their ſouls, who will not make uſe of them when ſo plainly propoſed; take heed of holding the truth thus in unrighteouſneſs, in neglecting thoſe duties which lie ſo plain in the word.

2. Bring the ſecond alſo home, and take heed of ſwearing, drunkenneſs, lying, cheating, and defrauding, of pride, uncleanneſs, Sabbath-breaking, ſcoffing; theſe things cannot but be with ſome conviction: and although thou ſayeſt, *God* hath mercy for theſe, yet God ſayes he hath wrath, and his wrath is revealed from heaven againſt all ſuch who hold the knowledg and truth which thou haſt of thy duty, under ſuch unrighteouſneſſe.

3. When men have had ſtrong convictions of ſin, and theſe have made ſome Reformation in their lives and converſations. and have given great hope of their converſion, and afterwards they have fallen to groſs pollutions again. 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. the caſe is ſtated there very clear; Firſt, there were perſons who had been groſs ſinners, they had walked in the pollutions of the world, ſuppoſe thoſe of drunkenneſs and uncleanneſs; but theſe had gotten ſo much of the knowledge

ledg of Christ, that they had escaped these pollutions, they fled from them as it were. But these intangled again, not with other sins of another nature, as the people of God may be and are, who are troubled with secret & inward corruptions, such as the world takes no notice of, and as they were never sensible of before; as Spiritual pride in duties. & vain thoughts *&c*, they are not intangled with these, but with the same sins which they had escaped. And that is not all, for a child of God may be intangled in the same sins again, that is for one act of sin, or the like, as *David* and *Peter* were. But he says, they are overcome, Satan prevails so far over them, that he carries them back to their former accustomed drunkenness and swearing, uncleaness, and the like. If once it be thus with them, there is little hopes of them, you may judge what the latter end of them wil be, it is worse than the former. Those men are so visibly and suddenly changed by the strength of bare convictions, and have not grace in the heart as wel as knowledg, are in a miserable condition, because they seldom hold it out long, and when they do fall back, it is a thousand to one but they fall foully; and when souls fall thus into

to their old ſins which they had eſcaped, it is a thouſand to one but they are held under them, and grow worſe and worſe to the end. Wee have a notable paſſage, *Matthew* 12 45. *They enter in. and dwel there*, they take up their reſt there. *The uncleane Spirit went up and down ſeeking reſt, and could not find it*; But now he enters, and hath what he was ſeeking for, as intimating in that he pitches here to take up his abode. Relapſes in the diſtempers of the body are more dangerous than the firſt violence of the diſeaſe; and ſo are ſuch relapſes dangerous to the ſoul, for if thou art a relapſed drunkard, Swearer, Sabbath-breaker, *&c.* thou art in no more danger than thoſe who have alwaies been ſuch, and there is more hopes of recovering one who never had any conviction, nor pretended to any reformation, than of ſuch who have by the light and knowledge of Chriſt eſcaped theſe, and are now returned again to their Vomit, aud wallowing in the mire.

4. When men after a high profeſſion of Religion, and of giving up themſelvs to Chriſt, fall back to worldly intereſts, and

minde

mind and care for that, with neglect of the waies and people of God, whom they have closed withal before. Every one who hath made a profession of Religion, and deserts it, falls not into open prophaneness and looſneſs, it is poſſible they may retain ſo much of the light of nature, and the word, as may reſtrain them from groſs evils, and yet they may loſe all the heat and warmth which ſeemed to be in their affections to the things of God; ſo that although they will not follow God and his people, yet they will not tread in the footſteps of the prophane, but they ſtrike in with the civiler part of men, who do not openly oppoſe the wayes of God, although neglect them, as they are for the world, and their care is how to be great, and rich; Religion muſt lie by to attend upon this; they are not ſuch who bring forth no fruit, but they bring forth nothing to perfection, *Luke* 8.14. They pray ſometimes, and hear, but the cares and love of the world will not let them do any thing well and perfectly, it eats up the heart of every duty, & in the end choaks their profeſſion. As we ſee it is with the Corn, it grows up with the thorns, next the thorns overgrow that, and laſtly the thorns deſtroy it; So is it

with

with ſuch mens profeſſion. Firſt, it grows up with the World, and the love and cares of it; he prayes, and he hears, and he does many things which he did not do before; but all this does not crucifie him to the world, he loves that as formerly, and his heart goes out ſtrongly after it; yet his convictions beeing freſh and ſtrong, his profeſſion holds with the world. Afterwards as his convictions begin to grow weaker, and fainter, the World prevailes, and he is leſs and leſs in the duties of Gods worſhip, and he begins to plead excuſe for his remiſneſs and ſlightneſs in the ſervice of God; he cannot ſpare ſo much time for prayer and hearing from his Calling; his imployments are many, and therefore that cannot be expected from him which is from others. Now the world hath gotten above his profeſſion, and in a little time it choaks it, it dies away and comes to not ing. thus it was with *Judas*, he had a covetous heart all the while he followed Chriſt, but at laſt it got ground of him, and he was bought out of all for thirty peices of ſilver; and thus *Demas* forſook the ſervice of the Lord in the Goſpel, when he met with an opportunity of imbracing the preſent world. 2 *Tim.*

4. 10. How many be there in these daies which have lost and given up all their profession of Christ this way, and have turned back only to minde the things of this present life? But such souls who fall off with *Judas*, and *Demas* to the world, seldom return to Christ, the day of grace seems near at an end to such as these. Take heed that there be not found among you such as these are, who after the pretended giving up your selves to the Lord, do fall back to mind earthly things, *Ph.* 3, 19. It is a sad sign that God intends to give such their portion in this life.

5. When men have sinned away their Convictions, and conscience grows quiet, this must needs be a symptom of a declining day; because the more stupid and grosse conscience grows, the nearer men come to hardnes of heart, and this is called in the Scripture, *a reprobate minde Ro.* 1.28 It is the very mark and brand of a Reprobate, of one who is set apart for ruine. There is a light in the heart of every natural man which doth direct and counsel him, until such time a it be extinguished, but if it be not followed, it wil go out by degrees, *Rom.* 1. 21. But to this light the Lord gives in the light of the Word, and some help of the Spirit, and if God

God do in judgment ſend a darkneſs upon the ſpirits of them who did not follow the firſt, what will follow in proportion upon them who quench this light and put it out? that they may ſin, with more quiet?

As ſoon as light breaks in upon the underſtanding, eſpecially if it be from the workings of the Spirit, although in its common workings it makes conſcience to ſtir, and that makes a head as it were againſt ſin, it will not ſuffer the ſinner to go on quietly, and if Grace be not let down upon the will, that labours to caſt out this unwelcome gueſt out of the ſoul, becauſe it cannot quietly enjoy its beloved ſin; and there is a great conteſt for a time betwixt light and corruption, the Conſcience and the Will, who ſhall carry it: Perhaps Conſcience while it is under freſh convictions ſeems reſolute, and will not give him leave to commit any known ſin with quiet; but at laſt corruption prevails and carries it; yet not all at once, it gets a little liberty for ſuch a ſin which ſeems to be ſmal, and then for another, & ſo by degrees Conſcience grows weak and feeble, and corruption ſtronger and ſtronger; and that is fulfilled, *Rom.* 1. 28. That becauſe they did not like

to retaine God in their knowledg, therefore he gives them up to reprobateneſſe of minde; they were weary of the knowledg of God in their hearts when they had it, they could not ſwear, and be drunk, *&c.* ſo quietly, becauſe of it, as they deſired, and therefore they deſired to be freed from the burden of it, and now it is juſt with God to take it from them. And what does ſuch a diſpenſation of God ſpeak concerning ſuch a poor Creature? does it not ſay, Let ſin have his courſe? Does it not ſay, Let this man go on, and let none ſtop him until he come in hel? Theſe ſouls are in a ſad condition being under the judgment which is written, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. *The God of this world hath blinded their eyes.* Thus it is with them who do not make much of Conſcience, but they ſlight it, and greive it, until they harden it, & when they have put out the eyes of it, they go whither they will, but they are not like to go to Heaven. The conſcience is brawny, and hard by ſuch hard uſage, as ſome mens hands are which are uſed to hard labour, and certainly the ſins which are againſt conſcience, do by degres take away the tenderneſs of it; and the more it is put to, the leſs it feels, until it comes to be paſt

fee-

feeling, and then it is past hope. The nearer Men and Women come to such a condition, the nearer they are to ruine; the loss of conviction is near the loss of thy soul.

6. When persons after a profession of Religion, and some trouble for sin, take up such principles as do strengthen them in sin, as too many in our daies have done. It is dangerous when men sin against light, but it is more dangerous when that which they call light, by which they walk, leads them to sin. It is sad for men to be led aside by the unrulinesse of their affections against conscience, which would hold them back: but it is worse when they have no more conscience of sin, and they have suckt in such principles as keep conscience quiet, whilst they fulfil their lusts. The Devil is very cunning, and what he cannot do by troubling the soul with the sight of sin, and by presenting the terrors of the Law, he effects by bringing a false unsound peace into it, which may strengthen it in the way of sin. The Devil would that men should have no peace, or else a sinful one; and therefore wee have seen, that when some consciences have been awakned, the Devil, who hath had a great hand in their

troubles, hath laid a plaister to them, which hath been far worse than the disease. As for example some are troubled with the thoughts of the day of Resurrection and Judgment, now whereas they ought to have improved these troubles, to the getting of a share in the first Resurrection, he hath cast this into them as a principle which they have greedily imbraced, That the Resurrection is past already; and these things of Resurrection & Judgment, they are things only done within us. This is a short way to shake off the sad thoughs which did arise from the consideration of such a day, and these do excedingly well serve for Satans purpose.

Some troubles arise from the want of communion with God in Ordinances, because the soul findes little sweet in them, and it hears that Gods people have communion with God in these Satan observ's this, & he presently layes a plaster, but it is a dangerous one; he tels them That they may enjoy it above and without Ordinances best of all, and this takes off their trouble by taking away the duty.

Some are troubled with the sense of guilt which lies upon them, from the Omission of duties, and Satan hath a way ready to take off this also, by perswading them

them they must not act untill they are acted; for if God will have them act he will act them, and therefore it is not their fault if they do omit such duties, & therefore they should not be troubled for it.

Some are troubled because of sin, Conscience is opened for sin past, and grows very fearfull of sin for time to come, & for a time perhaps they are troubled for this; but the Devil studies their trouble and he hath a plaister, which he applies, & it hath taken some poor deluded souls (*viz*) there is nothing sin but what a man thinks is sin, and that there is no law but the spirit within a man, and that is to be his guide and his rule, and whatsoever this man doth is no sin, if it agree with his light, it is no matter whither it agree with the scripture, yea or no.

Some are troubled, because they cannot tell whether the workings in their hearts be the workings of God, or some elusions, and workings of their own hearts; perhaps they have been under a searching Ministry, who hath opened to them the counterfeit works of Hypocrites, and Conscience hath been a little startled at these things. Now to take off this, Satan perswades them that God works all in man; yea good and evill,

light and darkneſs is from God, and ſo there is no difference nor diſtinction, ſave to the Creatures apprehenſion. Theſe and many more ſuch devices hath Satan, to heal mens trouble of ſpirit, ſo that hee may by it ſtrengthen their hands in ſin; and when they are come thus farr, they are in a dangerous condition, for they ſeldom return again,

The Men and Women which are in ſuch a caſe, are like thoſe Lepers ſpoken of, *Levit.* 13.44. *The Prieſt ſhal pronounce him utterly unclean, the Leproſie is in his head* If Corruption have gotten into his Principles, ſuch a man is not onely unclean, but utterly ſo, and without all hopes of cleanſing; for there is nothing left for the Word to take hold of.

Therefore Chriſt intimates the ſame thing in that, *Matth* 6. 23. *If the light in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs?* It is the more dangerous becauſe it is in the place and ſtead of light, it is that which thou followeſt, & is to guide thee; therefore ſays Chriſt, in *Luk.* 11. 35. *Take heed that the light in thee be not darkneſs.* That man is ſad who wants light, but he is worſe who follows a falſe light; Hee that is ignorant of God, and his ways, and was never inlightned,

is

is miserable; but more miserable is hee who hath bin inlightned, and hath now forsaken the light of the Lord, to follow the delusions of Satan, and corrupt principles instead of light; it is a manifest sign that Satan hath the leading of this man to perdition. Thus I have shewen you the sad evidences of approaching night; remember I do not speak positively, and absolutely of these things; I do not say when I see men fall thus, and thus, that their day is past; but these are sad symtoms that it is even at an end. When the Physitian sees the symptoms of death in the Patient, hee looks on him as a dead man, according to the cours of nature; but yet hath some hopes while there is life that he may recover, although hee sees no reason for it from the Patient: He hath perhaps seen some recovered in an unusual way, and when they have been past hopes. So it may bee in this case, although men have these spots and tokens upon them, yet we dare not be positive. God does go sometimes in unusual waies, and beyond the common experiences of his people, but wee have little reason to expect such things in his dispensations. God may let men go so farr, and fall so fouly, that all his peo-

ple may be ſtartled at it, & conclude him a veſſel of wrath, and yet when ſuch a ſoul is gone to the very borders of hell, and ther is nothing expected but his dropping in; then may the Lord ſay, return, Chriſt may come at the very Midnight, and it may be the darkeſt time of all, before the breaking of the day. But this is not Gods uſuall way, ſo that wee cannot ſay to this man, or to that, Thy day is over; yet wee may have ſuch grounds & footings for our fears of ſome men, as may ſeldom deceive us. I cannot ſay, that the day of Grace is paſt to any one of you in particular, yet I am confident it is paſt to many here; and I doubt my fears concerning ſome oppoſing hardened ſinners, and ſome Apoſtate profeſſors will appear at laſt to have too much footing. I could wiſh that the day of Grace were like to be as long to you, as you think it to be, but I am ſure out of what hath been ſpoken from Scripture it is plain, That is it a hidden, uncertain, and oftentimes a ſhort day &, therefore what I ſay to one, I ſay to all, *Harden not your hearts while it is called to day*; and more eſpecially you, who by all ſigns and tokens ſeem to be near unto darkneſs,

2. But ſome poor ſouls may ſay upon the hear-

hearing of these things, I fear my day is past, I have had Convictions under the Word, and I have made strong resolutions, but I have not answered them, I fear I have lost my day, when I lost these.

Ans. Art thou convinced of thy lost estate now, and of thy need of Christ? Are former Convictions revived, do they come to thy remembrance afresh, and do they make fresh & full impressions upon thy heart, so that thou doest now walk under the weight & burden of sin? Oh if God does open conscience afresh, and set it a bleeding under old and new Convictons, it is a sign hee hath not shut up the day; it is a sign hee hath not drawn away the Spirit from the Word; but he hath set an edge upon it, and it is like a two-edged sword, it cuts on every side, it cuts deeper into the Soul than ever it did; this is a great argument that the day is not over, when there is more light put into the Word for thy soul than formerly. Again, it is a sign that he hath not done with thee, because he puts in more light and tenderness into thy Conscience; if hee had wholy left thee, hee would have left the Word, and Conscience, and have struck the one dumb, and the other blinde, or deaf,

and

and have put thee in a condition past feeling, yet let mee tell thee; that notwithstanding these stirrings of Conscience, thou maiest perish; for these are not things to bee rested upon; God follows many men with convictions whom hee never converts. There must bee more than thy Convictions to shew for Heaven, for these are poor things alone, and do speak thus much (which is to my purpose) that thou hast now an opportunity in thy hand, and there is hope concerning thee, because God is yet treating with thy Soul about the great affairs of Salvation.

2 Art thou convinced of the evil of not listning to former Convictions? Doest thou see, and art sensible how great an evil it is to lose them? Doest thou see into what danger thou didst run thy soul, by slighting the first offers which the Lord made thee? and how miserable thou hadst been if hee had taken the advantage against thee, to have gone away, and to have returned no more with convictions of thy lost miserable estate; thou mightest have been now in Hell. And whereas thou art now awakened by the word, thou mightst not have bin awakened untill thou hadst awaked there; Art

thou

thou ſenſible of theſe things, & art thou now able to juſtifie the Lord, if he had denied thee the leaſt beam of light for thy Soul here? and canſt thou now bleſs the Lord for affording thee a freſh ſight and ſenſe of thy condition? this is a ſign the day is not over; for ſuch kinde of working as theſe are found in the hearts of the people of the Lord, when they have their Conſciences opened afreſh, after ſuch ſlumbers wherein they had loſt the ſight and ſenſe of their own conditions; ordinarily ſuch Souls ſmart for the neglect of former convictions, & are humbled for not following them. and they are layen down before God in acknowledging his mercy, in not taking advantage againſt them for thoſe things; and they are much in bleſſing him, for coming near them again in his word, although it bee not in a way of comfort; they bleſs him for convincing and awakening light; canſt thou do thus? then thy day is not yet paſt.

3 Does thy former loſs of convictions make thee more willing now to come in to Chriſt, and to cloſe fully with him in all things, and to labor after a ſerious redeming of the time to better advantage? does former careleſneſs lay engagements upon

upon thy heart to future watchfulneſs? do you ſay as the Apoſtle does, 1 *Pet*, 4. 3. The time paſt may ſuffice to have been careleſs and negligent of my own ſoul, and diſobedient to the Goſpel, and to the checks of Conſcience; as for that which remains, it is little enough for the great work of ſerving the Lord, and making my calling and election ſure. Now enquire, Do thy preſent convictions work thus? do they put thee upon more cloſe & conſtant purſuance of God, upon endeavouring to walk cloſe with him, and to redeem time for him? this carries yet more light of evidence with it that thy day is not over.

4 Doſt thou finde a difference betwixt theſe convictions, and thoſe which thou haſt formerly? That there is more of the ſtirring of the will and affections in theſe than were in them. There is a great difference betwixt the ſtirring of the conſcience, and the ſtirring of the Will; Conſcience may be awakened, and that may move a man ſtrongly after reformation, and the Will and affections may move him after his luſts all the while; and where conſcience is awakened, and the Will not changed, there the Devil may ſteal theſe troubles away upon

on false grounds, he hath many waies to quiet such mens consciences; but if the Will be moved truly toward God, there is no way to quiet that, but by the enjoyment of its end, which is, the enjoyment of God. Therefore the main thing by which we should judge of the work, and so of the day of Grace is this; by labouring to inform our selves aright, what difference there is betwixt these and former convictions, and whither these be better than they or no, which did die away, and whither there be more of the will and affections in these than in those we formerly had: for every work is so much the better as is it hath more of Will in it, which is indeed the seat of Grace.

Q. *How shall I know whither my stirrings are of my Conscience, or my Will?*

A. I might give you many things, but I touch it now but occasionally, therefore I shall confine my self to these three short directions:

Observe thy { 1. Troubles, 2 Desires, 3 Endeavours.

First observe thy Troubles, whither they be most for the sense of sin, or the apprehensions of wrath; if conscience be only

only awakened, that eyes only the wrath to come, & thinks of nothing elſe but of eſcaping, and it takes not ſin into conſideration, but as it is forced by the neceſſary connexion betwixt that and Judgment; but if the will and affections be wrought over in this trouble, then the greateſt trouble is becauſe of the evil of ſin, as it diſhonours God, and as it hinders the ſoul from communion with *God*, and the ſoul is troubled at the preſence of that, and ſtudies how it may be rid of that. Sin is a heavy burthen to a ſanctified will, but wrath is the only burden to an intangled, but not renewed conſcience.

2 Obſerve thy Deſires, What do they run out moſt after, Chriſt or comfort, Peace or Purity? if the trouble be only a forced trouble from conſcience, then the Soul does ordinarily look no farther than the preſent trouble, and how to be rid of that; it is peace that conſcience looks after; but if the Will be moved, that muſt have ſomthing elſe beſides Peace, it is not a calm will ſerve the turn, it muſt have Chriſt, and Communion with him, or nothing will ſatisfie.

3 Look to thy endeavors, when are they ſtrongeſt and moſt vigorous, and drawn out moſt after heaven & heaven-

ly

ly things? in thy troubles, or in thy calms? I have obſerved ſome, that when they have been under trouble, and terrours of Conſcience, they would then be very ſtirring, and ſeem to take much pain for Heaven, but wen the Conſcience is a little quieted, they lay aſide their Religion, and there is no more noiſe of it; this is a ſign that their ſtirrings were barely from Conſcience. But other Souls, whoſe wils were wrought upon as well as their Conſciences, have been more active and ſtirring in the ways of God, as they have gotten more peace & aſſurance of Gods love; and there is a clear reaſon for ſuch different effects from their quiet becauſe quiet and peace was the thing which the inflamed Conſcience ſought for, but the ſanctified will and affections ſought for another thing; & although a little peace may ſatisfie Conſcience, and take off the edge of it, this will ſet an edge upon the affections; that which calms Conſcience, quickens the ſanctified Will; for every reliſh that it hath of grace or peace mak's it ſeek for more. Try your ſelves by theſe things, and if you finde that your Convictions are accompanied with the ſtirrings of the will and affections, be of good hope, for thy day of grace is not

over

over, if thou haſt a will for God, if he ſtrive, and you grow more tender and ſenſible, fear not to follow thy convictions, and to lay hold of the Promiſes which ſuit with thy condition. Let former convictions neglected humble thee, but let them not diſcourage thee.

But withall take this word of advice, and ſo I ſhall conclude.

1 Take heed of thy Heart, leſt it deceive thee; thou haſt had ſuch ſtirrings which did look like a work of grace before, but they have died away; be jealous of theſe, leſt they ſhould do ſo alſo. Thou knoweſt how ſubject the heart is to grow cold, and to ſhift and put off Convictions, and when it is under them how ſeemingly willing it is to convert, and return to God; how ready to make promiſes and vows to God, and how ready to forſake all theſe again; it hath cheated thee once already, therefore watch it as a deceitfull thing, the way not to be deceived, is to expect it, or at leaſt fear it.

2 Reſolve to take the more pains, becauſe thou haſt loſt ſo many precious opportunities, knowing that if thou art not nearer to happineſs and eternall life than other men, thou art farther off, and thou hadſt

hadſt need labour to redeem what thou haſt loſt.

3. Beleeve not Satan, who ſayes thy day is over, for he knows it not, *and he is a Lyer from the beginning.* There is abundantly more hope of thee who lieſt under ſuch fears, than there is of one who lies and lives in ſin, and ſayes his day is not yet paſt. Satan ordinarily tels men, that the day is paſt, when it does begin to ſhine upon them, and he tels them who are in darkneſs, and in the night, that it is day, and it is time enough for them.

4. Prize thy Convictions highly, and look upon it as a great Mercy, that God will at laſt look upon thee a poor ſinner, an old ſinner, an old ſleighter of conviction, an old back-ſlider. Oh what a mercy it is to thee, that that dreadfull paſſage is not made good upon thy ſoul, *Prov.* 14, 14. *The back-ſlider in heart ſhall be filled with his own wais.* God might have ſaid to thee, when thou didſt caſt off Convictions at firſt, and when thou didſt back-ſlide from the Reformation which thou didſt begin. Be filled with back-ſlidings, thou ſhalt have thy belly full of them, thou ſhalt never have any more help to return. Oh what a mercy

is

is it, that after all this he ſhould begin to recover thee, and ſet thee afreſh about the work of returning to Chriſt?

5 Be much in bleſſing God for what he hath done, that he hath vouchſafed again to viſit thy Soul from on high, and to ſtir up thee again, when perhaps many that are in Hell were in thy caſe formerly; God hath taken advantage againſt them for ſlighting the Word, and Conſcience, and he might have done ſo with thee, if he would have dealt exactly with thee. Who is it that maketh thee to differ? Is it not the Lord? *To him therefore be given all honour, and glory, and praiſe.*

---

1 AP 57

FINIS.

Courteous Reader, these Books following are to be sold by *Francis Egglesfield*, at the *Marigold* in St. *Pauls* Church-yard.

Books of Divinity

THe Bdoy of Divinity, or the sum and substance of Christian Religion, by *I. Ush.* Arch-bishop of *Armagh*.

All the Works of Sir *R. Baker* Knight: 1. Meditations on the Lords Prayer. 2. On the first Psalme. 3. On the seven penitential Psalmes. 4. On the seven Consolatory Psalmes in 4to. 5. On the Creed in 12. 6. Motives to Prayer in 12. 7. Soliloquies of the Soul in 12. 8. Apology for Laymens writing Divinity in 12, also *Catos* moral Distichs, variously translated into *English* Verse.

Five Sermons on several occasions preached at the Court, 4to. Remaines in 4to. Riches of mercy, to men in misery 4to. All by *Doctr* Preston.

Lydias Conversion, or the riches of mercy, by *Dr Sibbs*.

The whole Workes of that reverend & eloquent Divine, *Tho. Plaifer*, D. D. in one voll. in 8.

An Introduction to the right of the Sacrament, in 12. by *Will. Pemble*.

The Burthen, and unburthening of a loaded Conscience in 12. by *R. Killye*

Mr. *Nichols* on the Church Catechism in 8vo.

Corpus

Corpus Christi and the Demonſtration of Anti christ by *I. Gurney*, in 12.

The uſefulneſs and excellency of Chriſt, by. *Ch. Fellinger*, in 8vo.

Divine Emblems, and Hieroglyficks by *Fran. Quarles* in 8o.

Gods Summons to a general repentance by *A. Hayſnet.* 12.

The Doctrin of the Bible, in 8vo.

Goſpel Converſation by *J. Cotten* of *New-England* in 8o

Occaſional Meditations, by Biſhop *Hall.*

An Expoſition of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* 8o. alſo a learned Commenton all S:. *Paul's* Epiſtles in folio by *David Dickſon*,

Spare minutes, or meditations, by *A. Warwick*, in 12.

The Garden of ſpiritual Flowers, in 12.

Bible battails, by *Richard Bernard* in 12.

The excellency of a gracious Spirit, and *Moſes* Self-denial, alſo the Saints Inheritance and the worldlings Portion by *Jer. Burroughs.*

Notes upon the whole Book of Pſalms, by *G. Abbot*, lately publiſhed by *Richard Vines*, in 40.

The Souls poſſeſſion of Chriſt, by T*ho. Hooker* of *New-England*, in 12.

The Saints dignity and duty, by T*ho. Hooker* in 40.

A Treatiſe of Liberty and Neceſſity, wherein Predeſtination, Election, Free will, Grace, Merits, Reprobation, &c. is decided and cleared in 12.

The Covenant of Grace, diſcovering the great worth of a Sinners reconciliation to God, by *Iohn Cotten.*

The way to Heaven diſcovered, and the ſtumbling

ſtumbling blocks removed, the ſecond edition inlarged in 8o. by *Robert Purnell.*

The Pſalms of *David* excellently tranſlated into meeter, and to be ſung in the uſual tunes, by *W. Barton* a reverend Divine.

The mortifi d Chriſtian, ſhewing the nature, ſignes, neceſſi y, and difficulty of true mortification, with a diſcovery of ſincerity, by *C. Love.*

A glimps diſcovering the ſweet Incomes of Chriſt to a ſpiritual heart, by *Rob. Dingley.* 8o.

The Parable of the Wedding Supper. in 8o. and a treatiſe of 18. Attributes of God in 4o. both by *Thom. Larkham, M. A.* ſomtime of *T. Coll.* in *Camb.*

Three Treatiſes, 1. Young mans Memento: 2. Now if ever: 3. The danger of being almoſt a Chriſtian, in 12. by *John Chiſhul,* Miniſter of *Tiverton* in *Devon.*

Decapala in Pſalmos, ſive commentarius ex decem legibus antiquis patribus, Rab. Hiſtoricis & poetis a Joanne Viccars, Anglo, in fol.

Books of Morality.

A moſt compendious and eaſie way of keeping of Merchants Accounts after the *Italian* manner, by *John Carpenter* Merchant, fol.

The Works of that famous Mathematician, *E. Gunter,* ſomtime profeſſor of Aſtronomy in *Greſham Col.* repri nted and corrected with additions, by *Sam. Foſter,* late profeſſor of the ſame Colledge.

The Handmaid to Arithmetick, reducing all forraign Coyns to our *Engliſh* money; likewiſe weights and meaſures to *Engliſh*; alſo what Commodities every Country affords, and the beſt way of traffick for them; it teaches Arithmetick ſpeedily and moſt exactly, by *N. Hunt.*

The

The Map of *England* exactly cut in Copper, with the Kings about it, by *W. Hollar.*

The Needles excellency, or a book of cut-work, a most usefull Book for young Gentlewomen, cut in brass plates.

Possellii Syntaxis, in Greek, 8vo.

Formulæ Oratoriæ in usum Scholarum concinnatis cum praxi & usu earundem in Epistolis, thematibus, declamationibus conterendis: Accessit dux poeticus cum suis aliquot poematiolis, Ed 7. Novissima Authoris limâ expolitis per Jo. Clark, B. D.

Phraselogiæ puerilis, or selected *Latin* and *English* phrases, very usefull for young Latinists to prevent Barbarism, and bald Latin making, and to imitate them in speaking and writing, very much inlarged by the Author *Jo. Clark.* B. D. and sometime Master of the free School in *Lincolne* in 8vo. also *Dux Grammaticus*.

C. Salustius, in Lat 24.

L. AP. 57

Rhetoricæ compendium, Ang. Lat. by *Tho Horn* Master of *Eaton* Colledge.

The Schools probation.

Rhetoricæ Elementa.

Vestibulum linguæ latinæ, the Rudiments of the Latin Tongue, all by *Will. Du-Gard*, Master of Merchant-Taylors School, in *London.*

Æsopes Fables, illustrated with Emblems, grammatically translated in prose and verse, together with the life of *Æsop.*

Rulneri Symbola, exactly corrected and the defect of the three Tables in former Additions, rectified and made into one.

The duty of Constables, Overseers for the poor, and Surveyors of High-waies, by *Jo. Layer* Counsellor, in 8vo.